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Reframed teacher leadership: A narrative inquiry

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REFRAMED TEACHER LEADERSHIP:

A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

A Dissertation

Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Approved:

Dr. Linda Fitzgerald, Committee Co-Chair

Dr. Mary Herring, Committee Co-Chair

Dr. John Henning, Committee Member

Dr. Joel Haack, Committee Member

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DEDICATION

To Jim, for your faith in me and support during this journey

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If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader. (John Quincy Adams)

It is always exciting to arrive at your destination's goal! However, I have learned that the journey itself is to be savored and treasured. During my journey for a doctoral degree, it had been a privilege to meet and work with wonderful people who have dedicated hours to my education and project. I am very grateful for the care and time provided by my advisors and committee chairs, Drs. Linda Fitzgerald and Mary Herring. Our chats and work over many cups of tea have been responsible for shaping this work. Your patience and guidance were very important to the success of this project.

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May 2008

ABSTRACT

Teacher leadership has been in schools from the time teachers rang the school bells. Three waves of teacher leadership have been examined. The first wave focused on formal managerial positions such as department chairs, the second wave focused on curriculum and staff development, and the third wave focused on daily acts of collaboration to solve problems and provide professional development activities for staffs. This study explored the third wave practice of teacher leaders in a qualitative study focusing on the narratives of 11 teacher leaders.

A narrative of lives format was used to study leadership experiences. A pilot study was conducted with three teacher leaders in two school districts. The teachers in the research study were purposely selected from a pool of graduates from a master's degree program focusing on teacher leadership. The teacher leaders shared their stories and their present philosophy and acts of teacher leadership in semi-structured interviews.

The study explored the relationship of teachers' personal and professional experiences on their construct of teacher leadership. A number of factors influenced leadership development including childhood experiences, serendipity and happenstance experiences, and mentors who encouraged teachers to get involved in leadership. Families influenced leadership activity and timing. Characteristics of meaningful site-based professional development and university-school professional development programs were examined. Principals either promoted or discouraged teacher leadership. The study describes implications for teachers, principals, and professional development programs and activities.

PREFACE

How the Journey Began

I can still visualize the conversation I had with my principal that initiated my journey on the school leadership team. The request for volunteers to serve on the new school leadership team had resulted in more teachers applying than committee numbers required. The leadership team concept was brand new to our district and each school was to develop a leadership team to help meet the demands of No Child Left Behind. The primary purpose of the team was to determine professional development activities for their school to improve student achievement. Although not stated as such, this was a radical concept for our district to move these decisions from the superintendent's office to the individual school site. The principal (P) stopped me one day in the hallway and we had this brief conversation:

P: "We have too many teachers who want to be on this committee. I am trying to decide if you or Mrs. X should be on the committee. What do you think?"

C: "Well, I understand why you want Mrs. X on the committee because of the core area she teaches, but I am extremely interested in leadership and student achievement and would really like to serve. Who else from the vocational areas do you have on the committee?"

P: "Dave Smith is on it and that would mean two from the vocational area and no one from this core area would be represented."

C: “You need to do as you think you should, but I think I have a really good working relationship with others on the staff. I also know how to listen and let others have a chance to talk.”

Based on this serendipitous encounter, I was on the team and involved with one of the most enriching experiences in my 19 years of teaching.

I will always be able to visualize my advisor leaning forward in her seat, tea cup ignored, inches from my face, questioning what I meant by my comment that teacher leadership meant “something different to me.” She probed and listened to my stumbling answer. The assignment followed: “I think you need to make a time line of your professional experiences that have contributed to your leadership abilities. Put your professional experiences on one side of the time line and your personal experiences on the other side of the time line. Do this in a quiet spot with a cup of tea. Let’s see what you get.” From this serendipitous encounter and assignment an activity developed that became a building block for my dissertation.

My personal teacher leadership path has been an unplanned journey promoted by chance encounters with people and happenstance events. I did build on these encounters and experiences and thus developed the belief that all teachers have the potential to lead. After all, we do this everyday in our classes. But traditional teacher leadership paths can miss the potential in our faculty. How can we further understand how life experiences influence leadership abilities and enactment? How does our journey influence and direct us? What are the stories that other teachers have to share about their journey? These are questions I hope to answer.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Overview

Teacher leadership is now a key concept for improving teacher professionalism and school reform. Leadership roles and development of these roles for teachers has been studied since the 1980s. Proponents of teacher leadership at that time traditionally focused on utilizing teachers' instructional expertise in teacher collaboration programs (Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986). Shaw (1981) summarized the wide range of factors that influenced group leadership behaviors:

Leadership behavior is a complex phenomenon which is influenced by a vast array of factors. The personal characteristics of group members (both leaders and followers), styles or patterns of leadership behavior, and numerous situational variables affect leadership emergence, behavior and effectiveness. Furthermore, these factors interact in complicated ways to determine group outcomes and member reactions. (pp. 333-334)

A shift to school-based management began in the 1960s and 1970s and research on this move also followed in the 1980s. David (1989) reported:

- Teachers experienced increased job satisfaction and feelings of professionalism when extra time and energy demanded by planning and decision making were balanced by real authority.
- Leadership, culture, and support of the district have far greater influence on the success of school-based management than its operational details.
- Implementing school-based management takes from 5-10 years.

Later, Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) recognized the untapped potential of teacher leadership as they discussed “awakening the sleeping giant” to unleash this potential. However, it cannot be assumed that the sleeping giant will rouse just because schools need the leadership. Fullan (1995) described models and activities developed to

promote leadership capacity which included university-school partnerships such as professional development schools; various teacher leadership and teacher development strategies such as formal teacher leadership roles, site-based management; and state and national efforts to raise standards. While these models all contain elements that will be essential for teacher leadership development, Fullan stated:

The first and foremost point in teacher development is that a wholesale transformation is required for *all* teachers. This is not a matter only for administrative and teacher leaders. It represents a sea change in the teaching profession as a whole. (p. 5)

Definitions of Teacher Leadership

Leadership is defined in many ways and generally reflects the predominant view of organizations. In the 20th century, the industrial model dominated the idea of leadership. In this hierarchical model, leadership is characterized by the central values of power and control. Leaders manage the members whose roles represent division of labor and responsibility. When used in schools, this model places the principal as the school leader and teachers with management roles in their classroom and on various committees (Forster, 1997). This form of leadership is conventional leadership, the will of one person or of a group imposed on others. It is management of people and resources. Conventional leadership can be by formal authority as per the principal or by others who have acquired power or authority through informal ways such as veteran teachers or teachers with leadership roles (O'Hair & Reitzug, 1997). The industrial model of leadership in school organizations focuses on (a) organizational outcomes or tasks, (b) emphasis on group ownership of outcomes, (c) provisions of consideration for group

membership, and (d) presence of structures and procedure to influence group movement to establish outcomes (Rogus, 1988).

In contrast to the industrial model, constructivist leadership is based on the belief that adults learn just as students do through the reflection and construction of knowledge. Constructivist leadership can come from anyone, at anytime, and from anywhere in the school community. According to Lambert (1995), constructivist leadership maintains:

1. Everyone has the right, responsibility, and capability to be a leader.
2. The adult learning environment in the school and district is the most critical factor in evoking acts of leadership.
3. Within the adult learning environment, opportunities for skillful participation top the list of priorities.
4. How leadership is defined frames how people participate in it.
5. Educators yearn to be purposeful, professional human beings, and leadership is an essential aspect of a professional life.
6. Educators are purposeful and constructivist leadership allows them to realize this purpose.

As schools strive to be more democratic, they build on constructivist leadership. The concern for internal and external equity is what transforms leadership from constructivist leadership to democratic leadership. Building on constructivist leadership, democratic leadership includes:

1. Explicit and proactive concern for inquiry into the nature of equity in the school.

2. Explicit and proactive concern for inquiry into the nature of equity in society.
3. Action component that works toward achieving ever more equitable conditions in the school and in the world beyond the school. (O'Hair & Reitzug, 1997)

Teacher leadership involves processes that promote a set of ideals in the school community that are both constructivist and democratic. These ideals include inquiry, discourse, equity, authenticity, shared leadership, and service. Educational reforms over the past two decades have encouraged teachers to construct new leadership roles. The educational system has placed the responsibility of change and school improvement at the door of the school and specifically in the school classroom. The concept of teacher leadership has been connected with educational reform themes such as (a) school improvement and restructuring, (b) shared governance and decision making, (c) site based management, and (d) improved student achievement (O'Hair & Reitzug, 1997).

Educational reforms are linked to teaching including the "knowledge, skills, and dispositions" of teachers (Damon, 2007, p. 365). Knowledge and skills refer to the pedagogy of teaching. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2006) defines dispositions:

The values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities and affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator's own professional growth. Dispositions are guided by beliefs and attitudes related to values such as caring, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and social justice. (p. 53)

Damon (2007) states a disposition is a trait or characteristic that is a "deep-seated component of personality" and further elaborates on the relationship between personality and disposition:

Personality is one of the grandest concepts in psychology, in the sense that it incorporates everything else. All of our ideas, abilities, habits, motives, virtues, vices, attitudes, traits, and dispositions are integrated at any one time into a unique personality that defines the special self that each of us has developed over time. The role that dispositions play in that all-encompassing pattern is deeply entrenched and long lasting beginning early in life and influencing the direction of the other components of personality. (p. 368)

Livingston (1992) stated, "Curriculum and instruction should be responsive to the learners and to the particular school and community context; and thus, decisions about curriculum and instruction should be made by those closest to the learners" (p. 10). Presently, teacher leadership is viewed as a process to facilitate change and continual educational improvement, a professional commitment, and a collaborative activity in the school community.

These themes are found in two similar definitions of teacher leadership. First, Crowther, Kaagan, Fergusen, and Hann (2002) stated that teacher leadership "facilitates principled action to achieve whole school success. It applies the distinctive power of teaching to shape meaning for children, youth, and adults. And it contributes to long-term, enhanced quality of community life" (p. 10).

The second definition of teacher leadership relates also to teachers acting in their professional learning communities to affect student learning, contribute to school improvement, inspire excellence in practice, and empower stakeholders to participate in educational improvement (Childs-Bowen, Moller, & Scrivner, 2000). Educational improvement involves transforming schools into learning communities for students and teachers. In the learning community, teacher leadership is designed around the processes that support and enable desired outcomes for lifelong learning and high levels of

performance for all community members. Processes such as collaboration, collegiality, and professional development are primary themes in learning communities (Forster, 1997). Lieberman (1995) stated that professional learning communities are places in which teachers pursue clear, shared purposes for student learning, engage in collaborative activity to achieve their purposes, and take collective responsibility for student learning. Central to learning communities is the construction of identities where new members can absorb how experienced teachers conduct and model their practice (Lieberman & Miller, 2004). Professional learning communities are characterized by open communication, trust and rapport, continuous inquiry, and improvement of work (Childs-Bowen, Moller, & Scrivner, 2000). A leadership path is not only chosen for a person but must also be chosen by the person.

Practices of Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership has developed in three waves since the 1980s. The first wave was in formal managerial positions with titles such as department chair, lead teacher, member of an advisory council, or union leader. By the late 1980s, Wasley (1991) reported that 10 to 20% of all teaching staff were represented by more than 50 leadership titles and nearly every state had adopted or was studying some variation of formal teacher leadership programming. Although these roles provided teacher leadership opportunities, the focus was on the effectiveness and efficiency of the system. This managerial form of leadership was joined by the second wave of teacher leadership which recognized the instructional abilities and knowledge of teachers with positions as team leaders, curriculum developers, and staff development planners. Second wave teacher leaders

have been responsible for curriculum and staff development, and staff collaboration within and between departments. These leadership positions required time apart from the teacher's daily work. In many situations, the teachers have become part-time classroom teachers and part-time teacher leaders such as curriculum specialists who develop packaged curriculum material for classroom teachers.

The third wave of teacher leadership grew out of a need to move from first order change to second order change for school restructuring. First order change focuses on trying to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of school and teaching practices within an existing culture. This offers limited change opportunities. Second order change is systemic in nature and suggests a fundamental cultural change in the goals, structures, roles, and norms of an organization (Silva, Gimbert, & Nolan, 2000). Wasley (1991) defined the third wave of teacher leaders as those who enable their colleagues to improve professional practice by doing things they would not ordinarily do on their own, such as redesign schools, mentor colleagues, engage in problem solving at the school level, and provide professional growth activities for colleagues. Third wave teacher leadership grows out of second wave and is anti-hierarchical and values collegiality and professionalism. Third wave teacher leadership includes opportunities for leadership to be a part of a teacher's daily work. It disperses leadership throughout the educational community. These teacher leaders, empowered by confidence in themselves and their colleagues, hold the key to improving student learning. They offer new confidence and alternatives for genuine school change (Ackerman & Mackenzie, 2006). Rogers (2005) was concerned with identifying teacher leaders:

It is intuitively reasonable that internal needs and motivations are some of the driving forces that compel individuals to become leaders. Leaders put out more effort than their counterparts who do not venture very far outside the boundaries of their prescribed work assignments. Leaders think beyond the day-to-day “work in the trenches” and take risks, both emotional and career, by becoming involved, taking stands, seeking to contribute, and speaking up. Leaders make themselves vulnerable to criticism and failure. The extra effort and risk takes energy and presumes that core “survival” issues are already secure. It is also apparent that leaders are driven predominantly from inside. (p. 631)

The three waves of teacher leadership coexist. Du (2007) stated “most teacher leaders exert their influence in both formal and informal group settings – such as grade levels, school governance teams, task force teams, and a variety of teacher discussion and learning groups” (p. 186). The acceptance and practice of teacher leadership in schools leads to the question of how teachers learn their roles and gain legitimacy within the school organization. What knowledge, skills, abilities, and talents are needed for teacher leadership? How can teachers understand their potential? What types of experiences influence the development of leadership skills? These questions were asked by Silva, Gimbert, and Nolan (2000):

Although calls for teacher leadership abound in the reform literature, virtually no research has been conducted using this third wave definition of teacher leadership that makes leadership a part of the work a classroom teacher does on behalf of children. For example, little is known about the roles and responsibilities of third wave teacher leaders or the knowledge, skills, and abilities they possess. (p. 883)

Teacher leadership relating to all three waves is currently practiced in schools. The practice of traditional teacher leadership includes the first and second waves of teacher leadership. These are more formal positions such as department chair, master teacher, instructional coach, and curriculum specialist. Teachers typically apply for these positions and are chosen through a selection process. Ideally they receive training for

their new responsibilities. Third wave teacher leaders emerge from teaching ranks. They take the initiative to address a problem or institute a new program. In many cases their influence stems from the respect they command from their colleagues (Danielson, 2007). Table 1, based on sources of information from O'Hair & Reitzug (1997); Pounder, Ogawa, & Adams (1995), presents the contrast between traditional teacher leadership and reframed third wave teacher leadership

Table 1

Reframed Teacher Leadership

	Traditional (First, Second Wave)	Reframed (Third Wave)
Focus:	Task performance	Relationships among members Shape the organization's work Build commitment in participants
Domain:	Technical Student performance	Institutional Perceived organization effectiveness Basis for commitment to school Shared values and beliefs Social integration = job satisfaction Group solidarity
Structure:	Hierarchical Leadership	Dispersed Leadership
Influence:	Formal authority	Constructivist and democratic Includes: inquiry, discourse, equity, authenticity, collaboration

The first and second wave practices of teacher leadership bridges to third wave teacher leadership when traditional teacher leadership is reframed. Third wave teacher leaders are actively engaged in collaboration with colleagues to support their vision and build consensus among diverse groups. A premise of reframed third wave teacher leadership is that all teachers can lead. Teachers derive their authority from their experiences in the classroom and lead informally by revealing their practices, sharing their experiences and expertise, asking questions of colleagues, mentoring new teachers, and modeling how teachers collaborate on issues of practice (Ackerman & Mackenzie, 2006). Barth (2001) supported reframed teacher leadership:

In the 1970s, Ron Edmonds introduced us to the ringing phrase “All children can learn.” Our profession has begun to take these words seriously, even believe them and act upon them. I would like to suggest an equally revolutionary idea: “All teachers can lead.” Indeed if schools are going to become places in which all children are learning, all teachers must lead. Skeptics might amend this assertion to “some teachers,” or “a few teachers,” or even “many teachers.” These low expectations are as destructive, limiting, and self-fulfilling as “some children can learn.” The fact of the matter is that all teachers harbor leadership capabilities waiting to be unlocked and engaged for the good of the school. (pp. 443-444)

Barth also stated that teachers who become leaders experience personal and professional satisfaction, a reduction in isolation, and a sense of instrumentality in the school community.

Crowther et al. (2002) maintained that teacher leadership is distinctive, diverse, and can be nurtured. Teacher leadership is a distinctive form of leadership as teachers are particularly well placed to lead the next generation in our communities. Teacher leadership is diverse as teachers are sensitive to contexts and enrich educational meaning and community life. A purpose of teacher leadership is to identify the potential in all

teachers in order to nurture and develop leadership. Three elements necessary for recognizing and promoting teacher leadership are (a) establishing an appropriate school culture, (b) recognizing teacher leaders, and (c) inspiring teachers' confidence (Bishop, Tinley, & Berman, 1997). An appropriate school culture promotes shared leadership in the organization. It is a culture that empowers teachers to trust and encourage teachers to collaborate with each other. As a team, teachers experience collective efficacy which is the belief that shared efforts solve problems and create change. Bandura (2000) noted two components to collective efficacy: (a) individuals' beliefs about the group's capabilities, and (b) individuals' beliefs in their own capabilities. The assimilation of these elements leads to inspiring teachers to be confident in themselves as leaders. In a study by Lambert (2005), teachers emerged as leaders at varying rates. The school culture and principal's role directly impacted the rate teachers' increase their participation in leadership. Dozier (2007) found that 82% of teachers recognized as teacher leaders reported they had not received training for all the leadership roles they had been asked to assume.

Fullan (1995) discussed the necessity of extending the idea of teacher leadership. He advocated moving away from a narrow view of a single individual trying to make a dent in a bureaucratic system toward a more complex perspective. This view involves multiple levels of leadership, all engaged in reshaping the culture of the school. Working together as a cohort rather than as individuals, teacher leaders build a new collaborative culture. In this new culture, it is clear that no one individual could assume all the leadership that is required. In order to be enacted, teacher leadership has to be shared.

Principal Leadership

At the school level, principals establish the learning environment and culture. The challenge for principals is how to create an inclusive environment while developing and implementing change within the contexts of educational mandates (Hargreaves, 2004). Principals are in a unique position to influence teachers by defining what constitutes success, setting goals, and developing vision. They guide school direction and transformation, and influence the interpretation of culture and mandates. The principal is “uniquely placed to influence teachers’ belief in their collective agency” (Ross & Gray, 2006, p. 184). Collective efficacy deals with a group’s beliefs in its competence for successful actions. It influences a group’s goal setting efforts as well as their persistence when barriers arise. As reframed teacher leaders become more engaged in school leadership and committed to collective efficacy, principals are also influenced. Traditional principal leadership shifts to more shared leadership. Communities of practice are created which still recognize the need for an ultimate school leader but function as a committed group (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001).

A study by Sun (2004) found that variables associated with principal leadership directly influence teacher commitment, especially related to making extra efforts and the desire to be active members of the school team. The four variables are: (a) leadership actions and speeches, (b) attitudes, (c) values, and (d) leader as self. Barth (2001) stated that by their day-to-day actions, principals build the culture of their schools. How principals choose to perform their roles either supports or inhibits teacher leadership.

Professional Development

A healthy school climate is one that encourages teachers to learn and grow. In 1999 and 2008, Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (MCREL) published comprehensive guides for school reform which stated that school leaders play an important role in establishing a culture that values lifelong learning. This is accomplished primarily by the process of developing a vision of staff learning that focuses on student achievement. Both guides included the following characteristics of effective professional development:

- Focus on teachers as central to student learning; yet include all other members of the school community.
- Focus on individual, collegial, and organizational improvement.
- Respect and nurture the intellectual and leadership capacity of teachers, principals, and others in the school community.
- Reflect best available research and practice in teaching, learning, and leadership.
- Enable teachers to develop further expertise in subject content, teaching strategies, uses of technologies, and other essential elements in teaching to high standards.
- Promote continuous inquiry and improvement embedded in the daily life of schools.
- Are planned collaboratively by those who will participate in and facilitate that development.
- Require substantial time and other resources.

- Are driven by a coherent, long-term plan.
- Are evaluated ultimately on the basis of impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning; and this assessment guides subsequent professional development efforts.

Professional development schools. Professional development schools have existed in many forms since the late nineteenth century as a setting focused on the professional development of teachers and their pedagogy. This education was directed primarily at preservice students. For the twenty-first century these schools have been reconceptualized to form a partnership between colleges of education and school districts (Stallings & Kowalski, 1990). The partnership model is becoming more prevalent in the evolution of teacher leadership programs (Vogel, 2004).

Serendipity and Happenstance

Constructivist teacher leadership promotes the idea that environment and experiences influence leadership activity and ability. In a business model, organizational achievements are often explained by the suggestion that there is a direct relationship between achievement and the effectiveness of the leadership in the organization. However, there are other business studies that find this relationship to be weak, non-existent and even contradictory. Svensson and Wood (2005) in their conceptual paper, "The Serendipity of Leadership Effectiveness in Management and Business Practices," stated:

So far, the literature and research that has been conducted has, to a large extent, neglected the serendipity involved in leadership effectiveness. Serendipity may be seen as the crucial parameter that may explain the impact of leadership, or the lack of impact, on organizational achievements. Serendipity relates to timely and

contextual parameters of leadership effectiveness and organizational achievements. (p. 104)

In the career counseling profession, the idea of change has shaken the very foundation of career development theory. There are dramatic changes in the kinds of work people do, in the way they do the work, in the structures of organizations, and in the psychological contract of employment. Scholars who reflect on the necessary changes to career development theory focus on the notion of “planful serendipity” as a bridging construct (Neault, 2000). The terms *serendipitous event*, *chance event*, *unplanned event*, *unexpected event*, and *unanticipated event* are used interchangeably in published research in career counseling (Krumboltz, 1998; Williams et al., 1998).

Planned happenstance theory, developed by Mitchell, Levin, and Krumboltz (1999), is an extension of the learning theory of career counseling.

Planned happenstance is a theory that helps individuals develop skills to recognize, create, and use chance in career development. Closely related to both constructivist notions of career development and career adaptability, it requires individuals to exercise curiosity to explore new learning opportunities, to persist despite setbacks, to meet changing attitudes and circumstances with flexibility, to optimistically view new opportunities as possible and attainable, and to take risks by being proactive in the face of uncertain outcomes. (p. 117)

In planned happenstance theory, counselors are encouraged to recognize unplanned, serendipitous events as both inevitable and desirable. Clients are encouraged to take planful action to generate and discover new opportunities for learning (Neault, 2000).

According to Bandura (1982) chance encounters and experiences can be some of the most important determinants of life paths. Chance encounters play a prominent role in shaping the course of human lives and need to receive attention within the frame of life-span experiences and opportunities so their impact on leadership ability and

development is not missed. Krisko (2001) reported, “Data, gathered from formal and informal teacher leaders, indicate that all aspects of life experiences provide opportunities to acquire the demeanor and skills to assume leadership responsibilities” (p. 12).

Planned happenstance theory from the counseling field can benefit reframed teacher leadership as it recognizes personal and professional experiences can influence the development of leadership skills and abilities.

Purpose of the Study

Reframed teacher leadership involves teachers who are using their prior experiences, knowledge, and skills to work as a group in constructing a learning environment to improve and enhance their educational communities. The purpose of this study is to examine the past and present personal and professional experiences of practicing teacher leaders in relation to how they acquired their competence and dispositions as teacher leaders. In this study I hope to capture the unique and common paths, experiences, influences, and characteristics of teacher leaders to gain an understanding of practicing teacher leaders. This study includes an exploration of the role of serendipity and happenstance experiences in the formation and recognition of teacher leadership skills and acts.

Research Questions

Reframed teacher leadership is grounded in leadership acts within the organizational structure. The overarching purpose of this study is to explore the relationship of teachers’ personal and professional narratives to their construct of teacher leadership. These are the questions posed:

1. What professional experiences do teachers perceive as influencing their development of leadership skills?
2. What personal experiences do teachers perceive as influencing their development of leadership skills?
3. Has serendipity and happenstance influenced leadership development and opportunity?
4. How do the stories of teacher leaders influence their model of teacher leadership?
5. Why do teachers become involved with school leadership?
6. What role do principals play in teacher leadership?

Methodological Framework

Hallinger and Heck (1998) suggested qualitative methods are the best approach to understanding how leadership is defined and implemented, for studying how leaders are shaped by their backgrounds and beliefs, and uncovering characteristics of leadership that are difficult to detect through surveys and qualitative methods. Since the early 1970s a unique perspective, with roots from research between the two World Wars, has been re-emerging. This is the social science discipline termed *life history* or *life story approach*, *life course research*, the *(auto) biographical perspective*, *narrative inquiry*, or the *narrative approach*. This point of view emphasizes the placement of individuals within an ongoing and evolving social structure (Miller, 2000). Narrative inquiry is increasingly used in studies of educational experiences. The study of narratives is the study of the way humans experience the world (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

There are three approaches to biographical and family history research: (a) the realist approach, (b) the neo-positivist approach, and (c) the narrative approach. The core of the realist approach is induction. Information collected through taking life or family histories is used to construct general principles concerning social phenomena. Non-directive modes of interviewing or soliciting information are indicated. The core of the approach for neo-positivist is deduction. Pre-existing networks of concepts are used to make theoretically based predictions concerning people's experienced lives. The core of the narrative approach is the ongoing development of the respondent's viewpoint during the telling of a life or family story. Understanding the individual's unique and changing perspective due to context is more important than relating straight fact.

The narrative approach best fits this study. The characteristics of the narrative approach are:

1. Fluid nature of individual standpoint actively constructed as an ongoing, situational project.
2. Questions of fact take second place to understanding the individual's unique and changing perception.
3. Life or family stories.
4. The present as a lens through which past and future are seen.
5. Reality structured by interplay between interviewee and interviewer in terms of representations.
6. Interplay between interviewee and interviewer core of approach (Miller, 2000).

The life story account by an individual is ordered or organized into themes or topics. The relationship between the interviewee and interviewer is crucial for constructing meanings. Josselson (1995) explained:

Narratives select the elements of the telling to confer meaning on prior events – events that may not have had much meaning at the time. This is a narrative transposition of Kierkegaard's famous statement that we live life forwards but understand it backwards. In understanding ourselves, we choose those facets of our experience that lead to the present and render our life story coherent. Only from a hermeneutic position are we posed to study the genesis and revision of people making sense of themselves. Narrative models of knowing are models of process *in process*...personal narratives describe the road to the present and point the way to the future. (p. 35)

The relationship between researcher and practitioner is constructed as a caring commitment. The educational importance of narrative inquiry is that it brings theoretical ideas about the nature of human life as lived to bear on educational experiences as lived (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 3). Personal knowledge and experience of the subject explored by the interviewer is very conducive to a narrative study.

In this study I hope to examine personal and professional experiences of teachers because one of the most encouraging changes in applied psychology in recent years is the growing acceptance of what most developmentally oriented career counselors have known all along. This change is that work and nonwork roles are closely and inextricably interlinked (Blustein, 1997). Personal and professional lives are intertwined.

Significance of the Study

The 21st century demands for schools to improve have led to school restructuring and second order changes (Waters, 2004). This era emphasizes the importance of the collaborative approach to school management and decision making and the collective

responsibility for the education of students. School districts are devoting time, energy, and funds to organizational changes that pivot around the roles and responsibilities of teacher leadership. Professional development and teacher leadership models and programs at the district and the university level are available to facilitate development of teacher leaders (Henning, Trent, Engelbrecht, Robinson, & Reed, 2004).

According to Snell and Swanson (2000), whether the focus of research is on the roles of school culture and climate or professional development opportunities that contribute to teacher leaders, missing from the literature are explorations of the experiences that develop leadership, and the combination of experiences, skills, and expertise that are accumulated by teacher leaders over the years and through many professional experiences. Snell and Swanson stated that very little research traces the complex journey that teachers undertake, over the course of their careers, to become instructional and reform leaders.

Leithwood and Duke (1999) indicated that “the most complex and important aspects of leadership are to be found in the nature of the relationships themselves” (p. 66-67). The purpose of this study is to add to the growing body of knowledge of teacher leadership as it is identified and practiced in a school district. By identifying factors that can be used to cultivate the skills, knowledge, and the dispositions of teacher leadership at the local level and in professional development programs, this study will help teachers, administrators, and professional development programs understand the influences and experiences that help develop leadership skills and refine the acts of teacher leadership.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Teacher leadership may seem like a new movement but teachers have been performing formal and informal leadership roles in their classrooms and schools for many years (Smylie & Denny, 1990). The traditional roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders are part of the hierarchical school organization and contrast with reframed teacher leadership.

Recent initiatives to develop teacher leadership represent often dramatic departure from these more traditional roles. They expand and create substantially different work roles and responsibilities for teachers. They place teachers with administrators at the center of school and district level decision-making. (Smylie & Brownlee-Conyers, 1992, p. 151)

This literature review of teacher leadership will focus on the characteristics of third wave reframed teacher leadership, the nature of teacher leadership in terms of act versus role, and the process of teacher leadership within the organization.

Traditional teacher leadership implies that leadership occurs by teachers filling a particular leadership role such as department chair or lead teacher. Teachers have the authority to fulfill these responsibilities as designated or assigned. This role is performed outside of the classroom and usually after contract hours. In contrast, reframed teacher leadership suggests that leadership is an act rather than a role. Teachers become involved in leadership acts rather than in prescribed roles. This style of leadership is constructivist and the review of literature will include information on constructivist leadership as it enables members in the educational community to construct meanings that lead to a

common purpose of school and meeting student needs. The internal structures and conditions that are conducive to teacher leadership, specifically with regard to principal and teacher interactions, are explored as well as the external supports for teacher leadership found in professional development programs.

Reframed teacher leadership is shared leadership, with responsibilities and tasks distributed among the members of a group. Leadership membership fluctuates within the organization as professional and personal needs change. According to Mitchell, Levin, and Krumboltz (1999), chance plays a role in everyone's career. This review of literature will explore how events attributed to serendipity or happenstance have unforeseen outcomes. A discussion of narrative life story approach and journey map technique in research will also be in this review of literature.

Teacher Leadership

Teachers have always been leaders regardless of whether or not their leadership has been fully acknowledged (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995). Teaching inherently involves leading in the classroom. In the 1980s, reports such as *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* by the National Commission for Excellence in Education (1983) and *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* by the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession (1986) called for school reform and taking full advantage of the tremendous potential of teacher leadership. In 1992, Lieberman stated, "Teacher participation in leadership may be the most critical component of the entire process of change" (p. 159). Twelve years later, Lieberman and Miller (2004) presented a new set

of educational propositions that represent major shifts in perspective and practice with the potential to transform teachers and schools. These shifts include:

1. From individualism to professional community as teachers move from classroom to school community.
2. From teaching at the center to learning at the center as teachers work collaboratively to improve teaching and learning.
3. From technical and managed work to inquiry and leadership as teachers view themselves as leaders who can make a difference in their schools.

In 2004, Waters discussed leadership as the responsibility of everyone in our schools as staffs work to restructure and reculture schools to meet the challenges facing education in the new millennium. In a case study of two secondary teachers, Frost and Durrant (2003) used the term “re-professionalism” to frame the view that teacher leadership needs to emphasize the collegial dimensions of responsibility, mutual accountability, and collaboration. It is not the industrial, hierarchical model of delegation, direction, or distribution of responsibility but the distributed model of teachers’ agency and choice in initiating and sustaining vision and change regardless of their experience and status.

Teachers are in a position to make change happen as they are directly involved in the teaching and learning in schools. Barth (2001) stated, “I would like to put forward the revolutionary idea that all teachers can lead. If schools are going to become places where all children and adults are learning in worthy ways, all teachers must lead” (p. 85).

Drawing on a case study involving 30 elementary teachers, Miller and O'Shea (1992) documented four paths toward teacher leadership: (a) leadership through experience, (b) leadership through knowledge, (c) leadership through vision, and (d) leadership through respect for children. Each teacher followed a "unique trajectory" toward his or her teacher leadership role. None of the teacher leaders in the Miller and O'Shea study held a formal, traditional teacher leadership position. All the leadership activities were "improvised, informal, and serendipitous." In fact their leadership was "forged through coming together of building-level needs and their own particular talents, interests, and readiness levels" (p. 209). These teachers came to leadership informally through the construction of peer interactions. Leadership legitimacy was earned, not granted.

Spillane, Hallett, and Diamond (2003) also studied how teachers assume leadership roles and gain legitimacy within the school organization. Using observations of 84 teachers in elementary schools in Chicago, they found that teachers constructed other teachers as leaders based on the interactions they had with them. As a rule, teachers valued subject matter expertise in other teachers and were most comfortable conveying leadership responsibilities to peers who demonstrated a certain level of expertise. Teachers became leaders because they had accrued the cultural, social, and human capital necessary to lead within the school.

However, in a case study of traditional teacher leadership roles, Du (2007) found that group leaders and members each brought different sets of skills, personal and social characteristics, emotional qualities, and expectations to work groups. The study was

conducted in a suburban elementary school recognized for high student achievement scores. Twelve female teachers who were leaders of various work groups were interviewed. School work groups have a porous boundary that is closely interconnected with the broader organizational environment. In this study, group leadership performance was related to school administration, school culture and norms, and externally introduced changes. Also a majority of group goals and tasks were mandated by school, district, state, and federal policies. In this type of situation, one unique challenge of group leadership in schools is that leaders must spend considerable time and energy promoting group solidarity and cohesiveness for the achievement of externally imposed tasks. A majority of the group leaders' functional roles were oriented toward building group solidarity and identity, meeting the social and emotional needs of groups, and maintaining communication. The successful performance of group roles depended more on the group leaders' personal, social, and emotional qualifications than on their instructional expertise.

Anderson (2004) interviewed 28 participants in a comprehensive multi-site study of six schools noted for teacher leadership. In each school the participants included teacher leaders and the principal. The research included survey and interviews. Anderson found that formal teacher leadership roles impeded some forms of teacher leadership. Formal leaders sometimes excluded other individuals or groups from leadership roles, and reduced the distribution of decision making and teacher leadership in these schools.

Teachers learn reframed, shared leadership acts through on-the-job experiences and practice, trial and error, and in the process of performing their work. In a study of eight secondary schools involved in a university-school partnership, teacher leadership was social and collaborative and involved reflective practice (Lieberman & Miller, 2004). In an earlier study by Miles, Saxl, and Lieberman (1988), teacher leaders in a large urban school district had a broad range of abilities and experience before they assumed leadership roles and they came equipped with a repertoire of effective interpersonal skills. A case study of three elementary teachers by Silva, Gimbert, and Nolan (2000) found that third wave teacher leaders have the ability to navigate the structures of school, nurture relationships, model professional growth, encourage change, and challenge the status quo.

Lambert (2002) interviewed principals and teachers in 15 schools in an urban area to determine how to maintain high quality educational achievement for the long term. Her study concluded how leadership is defined and framed influences how teachers participate in leadership. Smylie and Denny (1990) found in unstructured interviews with 13 teachers in one school district that teacher leaders' definitions of leadership roles included: (a) facilitator and enabler, (b) helper for teachers, (c) catalyst for individual teacher improvement, and (d) source of emotional support for teachers. Teacher leaders in the study did not think that teacher leadership roles include administration of programs and policies and evaluations of other teachers.

A contrast between traditional teacher leadership and reframed/shared teacher leadership definitions is represented in Table 2.

*Table 2**Definitions of Teacher Leadership*

Traditional Leadership	Reframed/Shared Leadership
Displayed by one's position in a group or hierarchy.	Identified by the quality of interactions rather than position.
Evaluated on basis of problem solved.	Evaluated by how people work together.
Distinct difference between leaders and followers: character, skill.	People are interdependent. All are active participants in the process of leadership.
Communication is formal.	Communication is crucial, conversational.
Usually relies on transactional honesty exchanges. May involve secrecy, deception, and payoffs.	Values democratic process and shared ethics. Seeks a common good.

Source: Chrispeels, 2004

Krisko (2001) interviewed teachers to develop a profile of a teacher leader.

Participants included 9 secondary science teachers and 16 secondary mathematic teachers. She described effective teacher leaders as constructivist educators who were willing to invest in the school's organization, understand and work with others, and share their expertise. They determine focus of work and direction by examining needs. Teacher leaders can be instrumental in initiating and implementing a major paradigm shift from traditional school to effective learning community. Attributes of a potential teacher leader include:

1. Intrapersonal sense: awareness of personal strengths, weaknesses, and goals (most important attribute).
2. Interpersonal skills: build collegial relations, communicate, and interact.
3. Creative: motivated, energetic, and tolerant of stress.
4. Flexible: open to and adjust to change.
5. Risk-taker: courageous and willing to test new strategies or ideas.
6. Efficacious: listens, reflective, empathetic, and understanding.
7. Humor: witty, creative, and uses humor to relieve tensions.
8. Lifelong learner: striving to learn, courage to learn, and builds on experiences.

Smylie (1992) found in a study of seven teachers and their principals in a K-8 school setting that the variable having the greatest influence on teachers' willingness to participate in different areas of decision making was the principal-teacher relationship. Other variables having statistically significant influences were responsibility for student learning, opposition to peer judgment, accountability for work with students, and professional outcome expectancy.

Printy and Marks (2006) concluded from three of their case studies that there are strong relationships between leading, learning, and teaching. In schools with high quality teaching, teachers interact regularly with their colleagues and administrators. Teaching in effective schools is a social practice rather than an individual practice. Interactions with school colleagues are a primary source of teacher learning. Professional development is organized and presented on-site by colleagues. Subsequently to benefit from learning opportunities, relationships among administrators and teachers must be

open and equitable. Printy and Marks found leadership within this type of learning community is often emergent and informal:

Designated or formal leaders typically do not guide discussions. Rather, in helping fellow teachers make sense of the realities of their professional lives, certain individuals within the group come to be understood as leaders by other members of the group. These informal teacher leaders help their colleagues to clarify values, frame problems, set goals, argue respectfully, construct and test theories, reach agreements, and design documents that guide their work. Leaders are able to translate private or collective meanings publicly in a way that creates new frameworks for interpretation and understanding. Framing various contingencies in new ways helps teachers make sense of their situations. Skilled participation in such sense-making discussions makes leaders out of teachers. (p. 127)

After a four year investigation of transformational leadership involving 1762 teachers and 9941 students in Canadian schools, Leithwood and Duke (1999) stated, “The most complex and important aspects of leadership are found in the nature of the relationships themselves” (p. 66-67). Chrisman (2005) investigated 273 schools over a two year period comparing low-performing schools that sustained improved student test scores with schools that were unable to sustain improvement. She found improved student achievement “seems to be the product of how well a school operates and depends on the quality of leadership and the effectiveness of instructional programs and practices” (p. 17).

Constructivist Leadership

Lambert et al. (2003) concluded from interviews with principals and teachers the concept of teacher leadership broadens when linked to the definition of constructive leadership. They stated: “The reciprocal processes that enable participants in an educational community to construct meanings that leads toward a shared purpose of

schooling” (p. 36). This leadership is grounded in relationships, community, learning, and purpose. It is not having a role but “performing actions” that enable all members of the school community to carry out actions based on behaviors and “purposeful intentions.” Those who perform acts of leadership need to have the following qualities:

1. A sense of purpose and ethics, because honesty and trust are fundamental to relationships.
2. Facilitation skills, because framing, deepening, and moving the conversations about teaching and learning are fundamental to constructing meaning.
3. An understanding of constructivist learning for all humans.
4. A deep understanding of change and transitions, because change is not what we thought it was.
5. An understanding of context so that communities of memories can be continually drawn and enriched.
6. An intention to redistribute power and authority, for without such intention and action, none of us can lead.
7. A personal identity that allows for courage and risk, low ego needs, and a sense of possibilities. (pp. 57-58)

Through their work with 200 teachers in a teacher leadership consortium, Reason and Reason (2007) found teacher leadership and strategic organizational inquiry are deeply interconnected and interdependent. They stated, “Without passionate inquiry, teacher leaders will not push to the outer limits or outer capabilities” (p. 40).

O’Hair and Reitzug (1997) following a study of six elementary schools, including two urban, two suburban, and two rural schools, maintained:

The function of constructivist leadership is to engage people in processes that cause them to wrestle with issues and dilemmas which result in their constructing new knowledge about the issue or dilemma. Teacher leadership should not emphasize simply empowering teachers, but also accomplishing purposes that lead to high quality and socially conscious democratic education. This means leadership must occur in multiple arenas and promote ideals that are constructivist. (p. 66)

Lambert (1995) agreed that constructivist learning is a mutual and interactive process surfacing ideas, assumptions, histories, and prior knowledge. It also engages in inquiry, dialogue, and reflection with the goals to reframe actions and plans.

Leiberman and Friedrich (2007) studied 31 teacher leaders participating in the National Writing Project and found they simultaneously cultivated their own teaching practice as they fostered improvement in their schools. By enriching their teaching skills, the teacher leaders grew in their abilities to support colleagues. Their daily experiences of guiding peers taught the teacher leaders how to reshape their own ideas, overcome their own fears, and renew their commitments to students. They increased their personal knowledge and ability to support their peers.

In a case study of five diverse teacher leaders by LeBlanc and Shelton (1997), one teacher noted, “Many teachers don’t understand that they can be leaders themselves. Maybe they choose not to – I don’t know” (p. 13). This study also highlights the importance of daily leadership acts rather than occasional leadership roles. Two themes that emerge from their study are the importance of modeling lifelong learning and positive peer relationships in teacher leadership. However one teacher in the study added, “You can get all the training that you want, but teacher leadership is part of who you are” (p. 12).

Murphy (1995) tied teacher leadership to constructivist leadership:

The notion of teachers as leaders plays out at both the classroom and school levels. At the classroom level, the constructivist perspective on learning...moves teachers out of – and students into – the central role of worker, of knowledge builder. The teaching role becomes much less one of performing and much more of helping others ...to act. Concomitantly, much of what teachers do as decision

makers and colleagues pull them into leadership roles at the school level. (p. 320)

Two themes that emerge from constructivist leadership are the importance of modeling life long learning and positive peer relationships (O'Hair & Reitzug, 1997). Constructivist teacher leadership is shared decision making and collaboration with colleagues. It is learning together to enhance the educational environment.

Professional Development

Reform strategies and high stakes accountability initiatives have encouraged teachers to step out of their classrooms to accept leadership as part of their day-to-day work. Hargreaves (1991) interviewed 50 teachers in elementary and secondary schools regarding emotions of teaching and educational change. He stated collegiality among teachers was regarded as one of the most effective strategies for promoting the professional growth of teachers, improving teaching, and implementing externally introduced change.

In a four year study of 90 graduate students from three different university-school partnerships, Vogel found that cohort learning is an "esteemed element of the program" (p. 219). Graduate students commented that they grew professionally and personally through cohort learning situations. These students were in administration programs.

A case study examination of seven professional development schools found: (a) teacher leadership is inextricably connected to teacher learning; (b) teacher leadership can be embedded in tasks and roles that do not create artificial, imposed, formal hierarchies; and (c) such approaches may lead to greater profession-wide leadership as the standard role of teachers (Darling-Hammond, Bullmaster, & Cobb, 1995).

The standards and accountability movement has placed “extraordinary demands” on schools to improve (Johnson & Donaldson, 2007, p. 8). To meet these demands, principals are urging an increasing number of teacher leaders to work with colleagues in roles such as instructional coach, lead teacher, mentor coordinator, and data analyst. Due to a shrinking pool of veteran teachers, principals have asked teachers in the second stage of their career (four to ten years of teaching experience) to take on these roles. This study by Johnson and Donaldson found when principals use second stage teachers for leadership, they need to provide formal support structures and build leadership roles into the structure of the school.

In a case study of teacher leaders, Du (2007) concluded in order to prepare teachers to lead effectively in collaborative school structures, it is critical for teacher education programs to offer training in a set of task achievement and social-emotional skills for preservice and in-service teachers in these areas:

1. Teacher education programs should develop beliefs among preservice teachers that collaboration is an integral part of their future work and that leadership is not a privilege, but a cluster of functions to be shared by all school stakeholders.
2. Teacher education programs should help preservice and in-service teachers understand that leadership is not a solitary personal endeavor; rather, it is interconnected with a broad range of factors that include the personal characteristics of teachers; the leadership style of school administration, and the functional, cultural, and normative contexts of groups and schools.

3. Teacher education programs, possibly in collaboration with educational administration and leadership programs, could provide training in leadership skills for both preservice and in-service teachers. These training sessions could include team and consensus building, strategies of communication and interpretation interactions, group development and dynamics, conflicts resolution, and collaboration skills.

The partnership between schools and external agencies to foster professional development programs has to be a genuine one based on mutual respect for different values, missions, expertise, and experiences. A genuine relationship involves schools and external agencies examining their needs and goals in order for schools and school districts to make arrangements that fit their own agendas and make the best use of local circumstances and local partnerships. This may require the external agency or university to refine their customary practices in order to provide a framework that meets the needs of the school or district. Frost and Durrant (2003) found in a case study of two teachers that a framework that supports teachers' development of leadership has three components:

1. Scaffolding for reflection, planning, and strategic action.
2. Support for critical discourse through support groups and critical friendship.
3. Support for critical discourse through development of a network. (p. 180)

Professional Learning Community

The professional learning community model is a “powerful new way of working together that profoundly affects the practice of schooling” (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005, p. 42). The three main ideas of a professional learning community are: (a) focus on student learning, (b) collaborative community structure, and (c) focus on results. Professional learning communities add value to the standards movement by analyzing, synthesizing, and prioritizing standards to aide teachers in instructional purposes (Reeves, 2005). Buffum and Hinman (2006) reported the number one district objective of a large school district in California was making their district a professional learning community. Results of the seven year study of this district showed academic improvement. The culture was changed and morale was high as 95% respondents stated the schools were a positive environment for students.

McLaughlin and Talbert (2001) found that only 3 out of the 16 high schools studied in Michigan and California functioned as professional learning communities. Transformation of a traditional high school to a professional learning community high school was incredibility challenging. Quantitative and qualitative methods revealed that the early days of transition for professional learning community focused on sharing materials and resources and critical issue such as learning result and best practice were seldom discussed.

Principal Leadership

School principals have the responsibility to guide their buildings and establish the learning climate and culture for students, teachers, and staffs. Principals’ influence on

teacher leadership was the most frequently mentioned relationship between principals and leaders in a study by Anderson (2004). Drago-Severson and Pinto (2006) investigated over a three year period how 25 school leaders understood the practices they used to support teacher learning in their schools. They found when a principal employed practices that facilitate teacher learning, teachers “thrive as they are challenged to grow” (p. 130). These practices include managing financial and human resources to minimize teacher isolation and providing learning opportunities and experiences through mentoring programs and placing more adults in the classrooms. These strategies contribute to teacher professional development.

Johnson and Donaldson (2007) interviewed 20 second-stage teachers about assuming leadership roles at this stage in their career. They found principals play a pivotal role in instructional leadership as they create conditions for teacher interactions, determine to some degree who sits on committees, and develop the master schedule. They set goals and expectations for the school as a whole and are generally involved in matters of instruction, assessment, and discipline. Principals can build support for teacher leadership by expanding its purpose, establishing qualifications and responsibilities, and encouraging teachers to assume responsibilities. Their findings suggest that “to reap the full benefits of teacher leadership, school administrators need to provide formal support structures and build leadership roles into the structure of the school” (p. 9).

Printy and Marks (2006) studied principals and department chairpersons in a two stage inquiry. They found that principals who can inspire and motivate teachers are more

likely to share leadership with teachers. One way they do this is by developing a clear and simple vision for the school that encourages buy-in from teachers. This generic vision is then open to the individual teacher's interpretations in a manner that makes sense to the teacher and thus contributes to their personal commitment. Teacher commitment is instrumental as it motivates teachers to engage in reframed leadership acts for teaching and learning. It is instrumental because "school-wide involvement is an important contributor to change in educational practice" (p. 130). By working together to enhance the learning community and culture, principals and teachers establish a climate of coherence and stability in the instructional program. Printy and Marks stated:

Principals alone cannot provide sufficient leadership influence to systematically improve the quality of instruction or the level of student achievement. Nor can teachers, even collectively, supply the required leadership to improve teaching and learning. Best results occur in schools where principals are strong leaders who also facilitate leadership by teachers; that is, principals are active in instructional matters in concert with teachers whom they regard as professionals and full partners. Where schools have the benefit of shared instructional leadership, faculty members offer students their best effort and students respond in kind; they are the organizations that learn and perform at high levels. (p. 130)

Implications for school leadership in a study of 12 male and female elementary teachers in a large urban city by Sun (2004) found that teachers perceive leadership as a reciprocal relationship between leaders and followers which influences teacher commitment in terms of productivity, feelings of efficacy and motivations, and empowerment. There is a need for an authentic relationship between principal and teacher and it is important that a teacher form a whole understanding of the principal as both a leader and a person. Sun stated:

Leadership actions/speeches that contribute to increased teacher commitment include providing opportunities for learning and professional development,

intellectual stimulation, recognition, building a strong team, making school a good place to be, support (including individual welfare concerns, discipline back-up, and financial support), praise, thanks, consultation of teachers, modeling practices, and direct request for the teacher to do things based on the good relations between the teacher and principal. (p. 27)

If a principal's values or actions severely conflict with those of a teacher a corresponding lack of commitment by the teacher results. The study by Sun (2004) found that principal leadership actions which provide support and encouragement, intellectual stimulation, and excellent modeling are typical of transformational leadership. The dialog between principals and teachers helps frame and make sense of education mandates and requirements in the current educational climate. Leadership, to be effective, must be spread through the organization. Sun also found that the personal relationship between a principal and a teacher is also a factor which influences teacher commitment. A good relationship increases teacher enjoyment and heightens the teacher's desire to make extra effort and to remain a part of the school team. A negative relationship decreases the teacher's commitment to school. Fullan, Cuttress, and Kilcher (2005) discussed in their study that the mark of a good school principal at the end of her or his tenure is not only that individual's impact on school achievement but also includes how many leaders are left behind who continue and go even further.

Serendipity and Happenstance

Constructivist teacher leadership builds on professional experiences to develop leadership potential. The world of work has been changing dramatically and over the years researchers have enhanced the career development theory found in career

counseling. A number of recent advances in career development theory support the concept of meaningful work. These developments are:

1. Constructivism: the search for meaningful work is connected to constructivism with its emphasis on deriving meaning from experience. As part of their career development, individuals can construct careers that are personally meaningful and self-managed.
2. Career adaptability: career changes are made without great difficulty to fit new or changing circumstances. This involves the ability to cope with predictable tasks of career development such as preparing for and finding a job as well exploring future opportunities.
3. Planned happenstance: theory that helps individuals develop skills to recognize, create, and use chance in career development. Closely related to both constructivist notions of career development and career adaptability, it requires individuals to exercise curiosity to explore new learning opportunities, to persist despite setbacks, to meet changing attitudes and circumstances with flexibility, to optimistically view new opportunities as possible and attainable, and to take risks by being proactive in the face of uncertain outcomes. (Imel, 2002, pp. 4-6)

Krumboltz and his associates moved career counselors closer to a unified theory of career development in the 1990s. His planned happenstance theory is an expansion of the social learning theory of career decision making. Its purpose is to provide a framework for counselor thinking that encompasses the realities faced by clients in today's rapidly changing, unpredictable world. Krumboltz (1998) wrote that unplanned events affect everyone's career. He proposed that counseling psychologists need to:

- (a) broaden their view so that the reluctance to make an occupation commitment in the face of unpredictable future events can be celebrated as open-mindedness, not denigrated as indecisiveness, (b) teach clients that unplanned events are a normal and expected part of the career development process, and (c) teach clients how to generate unplanned events that contribute to a more satisfying life. (p. 390)

Researchers have explored serendipity and happenstance in the work lives of people. A qualitative study by Williams et al. (1998) of 13 prominent academic women

in counseling psychology found the careers of all of these women affected by serendipitous events. In this study the most salient chance events were significant in four basic ways: (a) the most significant chance event in 12 of the participants' lives changed their career path (prompted careers in academia, counseling, or different research), (b) chance events also typically provided the participants with options, opportunities, or flexibility (such as promotions, national reputations, name recognition, and career advancement), (c) chance events typically changed the participants' self-concepts (revitalized an interest, affirmed professional life), and (d) some participants noted that a chance event helped them make new contacts (colleagues, mentors, research collaborators). Four contextual factors that influenced the chance events were: (a) timing of the event (early in the career), (b) stage in career development (unsure of career path, dissatisfied, or stalled), (c) internal readiness (able to take risks, flexible), and (d) external readiness (support system from colleagues, friend, peers, and/or families).

A qualitative study by Guidon and Hanna (2002) found that serendipitous events play a role in career choice and development in a case study of three people. Although the chance events were different for each person, the events occurred at a time when each individual was at low point in their work lives and each experienced a seemingly effortless but meaningful "aha" coincidence.

A qualitative study by Magnuson, Wilcoxon, and Norem (2003) presented an analysis of 10 counseling leaders' accounts of turning points in their professional development which led them to become leaders. These accounts support the planned happenstance theory of career development as five participants' emphasized

serendipitous opportunities and luck as influencing their professional leadership journey. Global analysis of interview text revealed a dynamic interplay among these factors: (a) personal attributes and values, (b) influence and support of family members and professional models, (c) serendipitous events, and (d) seized opportunities. The authors stated, “Data suggest that the 10 professional leaders who participated in this inquiry had personal resources and a sense of personal agency that enabled them to generate, recognize, and respond to fortuitous encounters” (p. 48).

Betsworth and Hansen (1996) found that two-thirds of the 237 participants in their study believe that their careers were significantly influenced by chance events. The authors identify 11 categories of serendipitous events that participants reported as significant to their career development. The three areas most frequently mentioned were professional or personal connections, unexpected advancement, and being in the right place at the right time. The authors also concluded that serendipitous events may influence individuals at different times during their careers.

Planned happenstance theory incorporates two concepts. The first is that exploration generates chance opportunities for increasing the quality of life. The second is that skills enable people to seize opportunities. Planned happenstance theory proposes that career counselors can assist clients to develop five skills to recognize, create, and use chance as career opportunities. These five skills are:

1. Curiosity: exploring new learning opportunities.
2. Persistence: exerting effort despite setbacks.
3. Flexibility: changing attitudes and circumstances.
4. Optimism: viewing new opportunities as possible and attainable.
5. Risk Taking: taking action in the face of uncertain outcomes. (Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999, p. 118)

According to Bandura (1982), some chance encounters touch people lightly, others leave a more lasting effect, and still others branch people into new trajectories in life. Some of the most important determinants of life paths often arise through some of the most trivial circumstances. Chance encounters can be either negative or fortuitous. Bandura stated, “It should be noted that chance encounters touch all lives throughout the life span” (p. 750). To explain the varied directions that personal lives take at any given time and place requires a “personal, as well as a social, analysis of life paths” (p. 748). Reflection on serendipity and happenstance events helps individuals’ understand and build on them.

Narrative of Lives

Narrative psychology provides a basis to examine life experiences and paths. It is based on the assumptions that human experience and behavior are meaningful and provides the frame for understanding self and others. The narrative theory of psychology promotes the need to focus attention on human existence as it is lived, experienced, and interpreted by each person. As individuals explore their human existence, they reflect and construct meanings to help understand their lives. A basic principle of narrative psychology is that individuals understand themselves through the medium of language. It is by writing and talking about experiences that individuals are engaged in understanding and creating themselves. The focus on meanings and interpretations is of paramount importance. Crossley (2000) stated, “It is through narratives that we define who we are, who we were, and who we may become in the future” (p. 67).

Narrative of lives can be used to reflect an entire life history or any part of the life story. It can be historical using data from a combination of sources such as diaries, letters, reminiscences, reports, and articles. When the focus of narrative of lives study is in the present, the researcher conducts in-depth interviews to answer questions and help develop meanings and understandings. The purpose of narrative life history is analysis of the lived life through the reconstruction of the chronological sequences of experiences. The purpose of narrative of life story is reconstruction of the present meanings of experiences as a thematic field. Other terms which describe narrative of lives are: (a) life history, (b) self-report, (c) personal narrative, and (d) life review. The goal is to reconstruct the significance of actions and interpretations of actions through an interview situation (Rosenthal, 1993).

The function of narrative accounts such as autobiographies is to reveal structures or meanings that previously remained implicit or unrecognized, and to transform life and elevate it to another level (Crossley, 2000). Suggestions for an interview protocol for exploring narrative of lives story include thinking about life as a series of chapters. Elements for a life chapter include personal experiences such as volunteer committees or professional experiences such as job-related committees.

Significant people populate lives and impact life paths. Suggestions from Crossly (2000) included focusing on four of the most important people in one's life and their impact on the life event or story. If the purpose of the narrative of lives research is thematic, focusing on key events and significant people help to structure the interview. Elements in key events include:

1. Peak experience: a high point in life story.
2. Nadir experience: a low point in life story.
3. Turning point: an episode causing a significant change. Its significance may not have been clear at the time, but clearer upon retrospection.
4. An important adult memory: positive or negative, that stands out. (Crossley, 2000)

Lives contain an infinite number of events and occurrences. The narrative of lives story represents a sequence of mutually interrelated themes which form a dense network of interconnected cross-references. It is by exploring these stories that meanings are constructed and acknowledged.

Journey Map

A *journey map* is a narrative method that can be used to explain the development of teacher leadership. According to Snell and Swanson (2000) there is very little research that traces the complex journey teachers take as they acquire the experiences, skills, and expertise to be leaders. These researchers studied 10 middle school teachers in order to help policy-makers and administrators develop an empirical base for understanding how teachers acquire their expertise to be effective leaders. A journey map was one technique used by Snell and Swanson to prod the participants' thinking about how they acquired their knowledge and skills as leaders.

Designed to be a tool to promote inquiry and reflection, a journey map is a visual record of past experiences and the relationship among these events, and it is a powerful way to showcase the evolution of an individual's personal and/or professional path. (p. 8)

The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands (1994) developed and tested this activity, called The Journey, which creates a document that visually represents the past. The introduction to The Journey stated:

An oral history is an excellent way to capture a valuable perspective about the past. Often, important information is lost because it is not officially recorded...The Journey is a way for teams to record events of the past in a visual or graphic way. In addition to being a creative way to track past activities and events, it is a valuable planning tool.

Purpose:

A journey can be developed for several purposes, among them to:

- Identify key events, milestones, factors, and influences that have been important over time.
- Develop a shared sense of history among a group of people.
- Honor how far a person, group, or organization has come and serve as a basis for celebration.
- Orient new staff among their colleagues.
- Foster an awareness of developments over time in newcomers and outsiders.
- Activate prior knowledge and experience in order to begin making connections to new work and next steps – to set current activities into context.
- Allow a person, group, or organization to explain to others what has happened.
- Document and reflect on change, development, and learning. (p. 23)

Journey map activities illuminated the processes by which teacher leaders acquired professional competency in their dimensions of teacher leadership in the study by Snell and Swanson. A similar activity called a *work line* was used in a four year longitudinal study designed to explore the work and lives of teachers in different phases of their careers. This study focused on 100 primary and secondary schools in England (Day, Sammons, Kington & Gu, 2006).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Overview

The purpose of this study was to examine the past and present personal and professional experiences of practicing teacher leaders in relation to how they acquired their competence and dispositions as teacher leaders. In this study, I hoped to capture the unique and common paths, experiences, influences, and characteristics of teacher leaders to gain an in-depth understanding of practicing teacher leaders. The research design was a narrative inquiry of lives which allows for a rich exploration of the teacher leaders' perspectives. This chapter describes the qualitative research method, including the interview questions with the research that supports the questions, and the coding categories with the process to develop the categories.

The research focused on two groups of participants. The first group was a pilot study group consisting of three teacher leaders. This group was used to establish the validity and reliability of the interview questions, procedures, and coding categories. The second group comprised eight teacher leaders, who were the research study participants. The selection process for both groups of participants will be presented. The 11 teacher leaders involved in the study will be introduced at the end of the chapter.

Research Questions

Reframed teacher leadership is based on leadership acts within the educational organization. The purpose of this study was to explore the relationships of teachers'

personal and professional narratives to their construct of teacher leadership. These were the broad questions for this study:

1. What professional experiences did teachers perceive as influencing their development of leadership skills?
2. What personal experiences did teachers perceive as influencing their development of leadership skills?
3. Had serendipity and happenstance influenced leadership development and opportunity?
4. How did the stories of teacher leaders influence their model of teacher leadership?
5. Why did teachers become involved with school leadership?
6. What role did the principal play in teacher leadership?

Research Design

The research design was a narrative of lives study based in historical and narrative research. *Narrative of lives* is an interdisciplinary method involving education, anthropology, history, biographical literature, psychology, sociology, ethnography, and folklore. *Life story* refers to a series of substantive events with emphasis upon ordering them into themes or topics, all focused on the life story of a person. Understanding the individual's unique and changing perspective as it is mediated by context is central to narrative of lives study. The study can reflect a general life perspective or reflect a theme or topic perspective.

The context of the narrative inquiry is a social encounter: it includes time, social structure, and also the social construct of the interview experience itself. The interplay

between the partnership of interviewee and interviewer is at the core of this approach. The two people involved in the interview situation are deemed collaborators who are composing and constructing a life story. The personal characteristics and experiences of the interviewer constitute one of the main stimuli in the interview. The discussion in the present situation between the interviewer and the interviewee provides a lens through which to view the past. Knowledge of the theme or topic of discussion by the interviewer is conducive to the interview. The treatment of the interview as a social encounter in which knowledge is constructed and shared appears to contrast with the everyday view of an interview as a neutral conduit. On the contrary, the narrative interview provides an occasion for producing reportable knowledge itself. Miller (2000) stated, "Confirmation or validation by external sources is no longer a necessary requirement for a life history narrative" (p. 9).

The narrative of lives study was used in this research to develop a vivid description of the influences on and characteristics of teacher leaders. Practicing teacher leaders were interviewed. The personal involvement of the interviewer as a teacher leader became a positive advantage in the interactions with the study participants. The interviews were audio taped, transcribed, and then sent to the participants for editing and clarification.

Pilot Study Participants

The focus of this research was on teachers who are leaders in their schools. The selection of participants for this study was purposeful and directed to teachers who were

identified as leaders in their school buildings. There were two groups of teachers included in the study, the pilot study teachers and the research study teachers.

The pilot study teachers were recommended by their associates as acknowledged teacher leaders. They were three teachers who served on school leadership teams and committees in two school districts not associated with the research group. The three teachers had a total of 69 years of teaching experience and had been involved with a wide variety of committees, groups, and activities. They had master degrees in their respective areas of education, science, and reading. The three teachers had taught at all age levels from kindergarten through ninth grade; one teacher taught reading kindergarten through sixth grade and two teachers taught courses seventh through ninth grades.

Research Study Participants

The second group comprised the research participants who were purposely selected because of their teacher leadership professional development. The recruitment pool was from the population of teachers who had graduated from a master's degree program entitled Educational Psychology: Professional Development for Teachers (MAE). The degree was from a Midwestern state university. The focus of the program was teacher leadership. The program cohort consisted of 24 teachers, 7 from two middle schools, and 17 from eight elementary schools. Cohort members were veteran teachers; 19 were Caucasian women, four were African-American women, and one was a Caucasian man. Many of the teachers were serving on building leadership teams or as grade level leaders and some were serving on district wide initiatives (Henning et al., 2004).

Educational Psychology: Professional Development for Teachers (MAE)

The MAE program was implemented by a Midwestern university based on a request from a school district that was experiencing an expanding need for new and more diverse leadership. The school district was an urban district with a diverse student population. The development of the university-school partnership was aided by a state grant. The MAE program design was developed collaboratively by the university and the school district to include three strands: leadership, assessment, and curriculum. The program goals were:

1. To increase the pool of available leadership by recruiting, developing, and retaining teacher leaders from under represented populations and by preparing interested participants for administrative positions.
2. To develop teacher leaders who can foster professional learning communities that facilitates student achievement.
3. To develop teacher leaders who can engage their peers in the analysis of student achievement data for the purpose of continuous school improvement.
4. To develop teacher leaders who can initiate the collection and interpretation of action research data for the purpose of selecting research-based program interventions.
5. To develop teacher leaders who can initiate the collection and analysis of data for the purpose of evaluating program improvements. (Henning et al., 2004, p. 404)

Coursework included four classes in instructional leadership, three classes in educational leadership, two classes in research and assessment, one class in instructional psychology, a significant number of practicum hours in their schools, and a culminating project involving teacher leadership.

A teacher's admission to the master's degree program was based upon recommendation of the building principal, two letters of reference, transcripts of previous coursework, and a personal statement written by the candidate.

Research Study Participant Selection

The sampling for this study followed purposeful sampling technique as found in Bogdan and Biklen (2003). The 18 cohort members who had graduated with a master's degree from the MAE program were first contacted by email questionnaire (Appendix A). The primary purpose of the email questionnaire was to identify teachers who had maintained active teacher leadership involvement in their schools after graduation from the university program. This questionnaire was used to survey current teacher leadership activities and practices and request participation in further research in a face-to-face interview setting.

The email questionnaire had a checklist to determine leadership activities and responsibilities, and willingness to participate in a face-to-face interview. The completed and returned email questionnaires were evaluated for teacher leadership activities and willingness to participate in this research. This evaluation was completed in consultation with a professor from the MAE program. The goal was for a minimum of six teacher leaders to participate in further interviews for the research study.

Research Procedures

Research Study Participants

Eight teacher leaders in the purposeful sampling group responded to the email questionnaire. All eight were actively involved in school leadership activities. Following consultation with a professor from the MAE program, the eight responders were contacted by letter (Appendix B) to further explain the research and request participation in the study. After one week, the letter was followed by a phone call (Appendix C) to

answer any questions, confirm participation in the research study, and set up an interview appointment. All eight teacher leaders indicated an interest and willingness to be personally interviewed for the study. At this time the journey map was introduced and explained. It was immediately mailed to the participants (Appendix D).

Journey Map

A journey map was utilized to help the participants visualize and document their leadership journey. The journey map developed for this study was based on research by Snell and Swanson (2000). However, the journey map for this study added personal experiences to the format so that personal and professional activities were noted on the document. The journey map was mailed to the participants before their scheduled interview. It was prepared by the participants before coming to the interviews to help them recall professional and personal experiences that contributed to their knowledge and skills as leaders, and then each participant brought their map to the interview. This document was shared during the interview and collected as part of triangulation of information (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

Interview Scheduling

During the phone conversations to confirm participation, the research participants chose their interview locations and times. The eight teachers who responded to the email questionnaire were personally interviewed for the study. The importance of meeting in a quiet place for the interviews was stressed. Interview sites included private meeting rooms at the public library and teachers' classrooms after student dismissal for the day. The interviews were from 90 to 120 minutes in length and were audiotape recorded for

accuracy. The interviews were transcribed and sent to the research participants for additions and corrections.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with three teacher leaders prior to interviews with the research study participants. The pilot study established the interview protocol and questions. Potential interviewees were contacted by letter and asked to participate in a pilot study (Appendix I). The letter was followed by a phone call (Appendix C) to answer any questions, confirm participation in the pilot study, and set up an interview appointment. At this time the journey map was discussed and then mailed to the participants (Appendix D). During the phone conversation the participants chose the interview location and time. The two options were the participant's school or a private meeting room at the local public library. The interview questions and format are in Appendix G. Permission to audiotape record the interviews was requested and received at the interview (Appendix F).

Interview Questions

Interview questions usually move from general to specific and from topical to probing (Mertens, 1998). Interview questions for this study were informed by a review of relevant literature. The interview format and questions for this study covered the participants': (a) past and present teacher leadership responsibilities in their schools and district, (b) past and present professional and personal influences, (c) the roles of serendipity and happenstance in their leadership development and experiences, (d) their

views of the role of their principal in terms of teacher leadership, and (e) their personal model of teacher leadership.

Framing questions for the interviews were based on two research studies. The questions relating to teacher leadership were from a case study of three teachers by Stone, Horejs, and Lomas (1997). These teachers, each from an elementary, middle, and high school, were asked these questions:

1. How do you define teacher leadership?
2. What activities involve teacher leaders?
3. Who selects teacher leaders?
4. What structures support or constrain teacher leadership?
5. What are the desired outcomes of teacher leadership?

The questions relating to serendipity and happenstance were from the counseling field. These questions were recommendations by Mitchell, Levin, and Krumboltz (1999) for career counselors to use with clients. The two questions from the counseling field were:

1. How have unplanned events influenced your career?
2. How did you enable these events to influence you?

These broad questions were combined to provide the basic framework for the interview questions relating to teacher leadership experiences and practices.

Interview Protocol

Narrative life stories have a semi-structured interview framework that consists of three areas: (a) biographical information and factual details, (b) thematic field

information and areas of concentration, and (c) analysis and reconstruction of data. The interview questions related to biographical and factual information came from a study by Smylie and Denny (1990). The interview questions related to the theme of teacher leadership came from studies including Henning et al. (2004), Lambert (1995), LeBlanc and Shelton (1997), O'Hair and Reitzug (1997), and Smylie and Denny. The interview questions related to serendipity and happenstance came from a study by Crossley (2000). The specific interview questions with research source documentation are listed in Appendix E. Data analysis and reconstruction involved follow-up contacts to clarify information.

The time frame for the interviews was between 90 to 120 minutes. Interviews were held in quiet locations. Written permission to audiotape record the interviews was received at the beginning of the meeting (Appendix F). Assurances were given to the participants that the audiotape recordings and transcripts of the interviews were completely confidential and would be destroyed following dissertation approval.

Interview Format

The interview format and order of questions were planned in consultation with a professor of the MAE program and advisor for this dissertation. The questions are presented in Appendix G. A constant comparative method was used during the pilot study interview process to expand and enhance the questions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). During the pilot study, participants mentioned the role their principals played in teacher leadership. The pilot study participants also remarked when they were college students in preservice programs the teacher leadership facet was not part of their conception of

teaching. Questions relating to these areas were incorporated in the interviews. Themes including seniority and passion were shared during the pilot study. After the pilot study, questions were rearranged to place discussion of the journey map toward the end of the interview with the questions on serendipity. It was found that experiences relating to serendipity and happenstance were frequently mentioned on the journey maps so this move aligned these discussion areas closer together. Beginning the interviews with current teaching and leadership responsibilities and activities became a natural introductory practice during the pilot study. The complete list of interview questions is in Appendix H. The interview format was semi-structured with a conversational tone between the interviewer and the participant being interviewed. Audiotapes of the interviews were transcribed and the participants were contacted for clarification and further elaboration of interview information.

Data Analysis

Semi-structured, open-ended, in-depth interviews were used to collect teachers' descriptions, feelings, thoughts, and perspectives regarding their teacher leadership journey and activities. Themes for coding the data were first developed from the framework of the study and constructs from the literature relating to third wave reframed teacher leadership. The coding categories directly relate to information presented in Table 1 found in Chapter 1, and Table 2 found in Chapter 2. The four coding areas used to initially examine the interviews and journey maps include focus, domain, structure, and influence of teacher leadership. These categories are found in Table 3.

All 11 interviews were coded according to the themes presented in Table 3.

During this process, it was difficult to determine how to code certain statements from the interviews. For example, there were thoughts and information that mutually reflected relationships, dispersed leadership, and collaboration. Commitment was reflected in both areas of focus and domain. Because of these overlaps, professors in the MAE program and in education were consulted to help redesign the coding categories.

Table 3

Initial Coding Categories for Reframed Teacher Leadership

Focus:	Relationships among members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shape the organizational work • Build participant's commitment
Domain:	Institutional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived organizational effectiveness • Basis for commitment to school • Shared values and beliefs • Social integration = job satisfaction • Group solidarity
Structure:	Dispersed Leadership
Influence:	Constructivist and democratic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquiry • Discourse • Equity • Authenticity • Collaboration

Coding System for Teacher Leadership

A new coding system was developed that aligned with the interview themes and also with the research on reframed leadership. The information shared by the teachers and their leadership activities and practices primarily influenced the coding categories. These themes related to three broad areas in teacher leadership: purposes, acts, and preparations.

Purposes of Teacher Leadership

Purposes of teacher leadership include personal and professional interests and concerns. Teachers' personal reasons to be involved in leadership included desires for self-actualization, interests in achievement and accomplishment, personal goals, and desires to make a difference and contribute. The primary professional purpose of teacher leadership was to affect student achievement and performance. Teachers focused on improving instruction as the major avenue to accomplish this goal. Other purposes mirrored personal ones and included achievement, accomplishment, goals, and desire to contribute and make a difference in the school organization.

Acts of Teacher Leadership

Acts and practices, rather than roles, characterize reframed teacher leadership. These acts affect the climate and the culture of the school community. The acts of teacher leadership involve shared leadership, collective efficacy, and collaboration. The acts were part of the day, accomplished at the school site; involving small and large numbers of staff. Teacher leadership functions under the auspices of the principals who establish the school structure.

Preparations for Teacher Leadership

Teachers developed their leadership skills through journeys that included personal and professions influences, formal and informal experiences, and serendipity and happenstance events. Experiences also spanned many years, from youth through adult periods. The ability to build on these experiences was an important part of preparations for teacher leadership.

Finalizing the Coding Categories

The new categories were used by a professor in leadership education to recode an interview. This professor was involved in development of neither the original nor the revised coding system. The professor coded the interview with 90% agreement with the researcher's coding. One coding area produced some disagreement concerning purposes of teacher leadership. The coder and researcher found a fine line between personal and professional desires for achievement and accomplishment. The coding was discussed and clarified. The revised coding terms and categories were found to be clear and suitable to code the interviews. The coding system aligned with personal and professional purposes, acts, and preparations for teacher leadership; and reflected third wave reframed teacher leadership concepts. The coding categories with identifying descriptions are presented in Table 4.

Data analysis using the new coding system occurred at two levels. First, the analysis was at the individual level with the personal narrative and journey map compared for practice of teacher leadership definition and activity as associated with the reframed, third wave model of teacher leadership. The second level of analysis was

comparing and contrasting the narrative and construct of each participant with other participants. Triangulation of data occurred with journey map documentation, interview transcripts, and review of transcripts by study participants.

Table 4

Teacher Leadership (TL) Coding System

<u>PURPOSES</u>	<u>ACTS</u>	<u>PREPARATIONS</u>
<u>Personal</u> Self actualization Achievement Accomplishment Goals Desire to contribute, make a difference	<u>Practices</u> Collective efficacy Dispersed leadership Building professional learning community Shared knowledge Collaboration	<u>Personal</u> <u>Professional</u> <u>Informal</u> <u>Formal</u> <u>Experiences, activities</u> peak nadir serendipity
<u>Characteristics</u> Uses interpersonal strengths, awareness of weaknesses	<u>Characteristics</u> All staff involved Seek a common good Interdependent	
<u>School</u> Student achievement, performance Achievement Accomplishment Goals Desire to contribute, make a difference Work of organization to affect goals of organization	<u>Relationship with Principal</u> Collegial Flexible Professional Principal understands and establishes an organizational structure that either promotes or stifles TL	

The semi-structured, in-depth interviews following a narrative of lives format were conducted with 11 teacher leaders over a six month period. The three pilot study teacher leaders and the eight research study teacher leaders who graduated from the master's degree program entitled Educational Psychology: Professional Development for Teachers (MAE) are identified and introduced with their pseudonyms.

Introduction of Participants

A narrative of lives study employs the personal stories of research participants to explore activities and events related to themes or questions. The sharing of experiences helps individuals to understand and interpret their lives in relation to the areas of interest or study. The rapport between the interviewer and interviewee is also an important element in narrative of lives study.

The pilot study participants and research study participants were identified as active and dedicated teacher leaders. They taught students in ages from pre-kindergarten to ninth grade. The middle school and junior high teachers taught courses in science, reading, and talented and gifted. An overview of the participants is presented in Table 5. Brief introductions follow the table to provide insight into general characteristics, backgrounds, and journeys of the pilot study and research study teacher leaders.

According to Connelly and Clandinin (1990), narrative documents frequently contain brief sketches of participant's character and environment. In narrative writing, character and physical environment need to work in harmony with context. The telling of a research story also requires the researcher to use the "I" voice as the researcher and participant interact and share during the interviews.

Table 5

Teacher Leaders' Profiles

	Years Teaching	Grade Teaching	Children at Home Elem. Second.	Masters Degree Program TL* Other Areas		Future Plans TL* Admin.	
<u>Pilot Study</u>							
April	32	K-6 Reading			X		X
Hillary	20	7-9 TAG**			X		X
Kristen	17	7-9 Science			X		X
<u>Research Participants</u>							
Alex	7	K-5 Sp. Ed.***	X	X			X
Carol	8	3	X	X	X		X
Cinda	12	7 Reading	X	X			X
Kim	14	6-8 TAG		X			X
Jenny	20	Pre K		X			X
Lee	27	5	X	X			X
Melanie	12	K-5	X	X	X		X
Tara	15	2 Sp. Ed.***		X			X

* abbreviation for Teacher Leadership

**abbreviation for Talented and Gifted program

*** abbreviation for Multi-Categorical Special Needs program

Pilot Study Participants

The pilot study participants were recognized teacher leaders with extensive leadership activities and experiences. Because of the courses involved, as a group, they taught every grade level from kindergarten through ninth grade.

Participant I: Hillary

Hillary had taught Talented and Gifted Students (TAG) for 23 years plus had been the district TAG program coordinator for 13 years. She produced their TV show and had received numerous educational and community honors and awards. Hillary taught the “7 habits” (Covey, 1989) to her students and stated: “That has had a huge impact on my life both professionally and personally. I use the 7 habits daily. I don’t ever have to think about which habit I am using. Habit 5C, try to understand and then be understood, is the most critical one of the 7 habits. Try to understand where other people are coming from and stand in their shoes before you push to be understood.” Hillary practiced leadership on the many committees she served and also taught it to her students. I knew that Hillary would provide valuable input about our interview and was pleased when she said that I had “made her think” during the interview.

Participant II: April

April had been teaching for 32 years. She had taught in a small school district for 30 years, the first half of this time with kindergarten children and then she “rejuvenated” herself and became the Title One Reading teacher, working with all grade levels. She had been president of their Teachers Association four times [this must be a record] and helped write the first master contract for her district. She was an active school and

community volunteer, an avid college football fan, and one of the nicest people I know. She was very modest on the personal side of her journey map and from this I learned to draw people out and encourage them to tell their stories. She divided her professional journey map into sections with “clouds” (titles) over the sections representing positive attitude, passion, colleagues, workshops, and seniority. She was a strong instructional leader and highlights of her professional development included visits to her school district by William Glasser (1998) and Robert Marzano (2003) [before they became internationally recognized educators] and then later working and traveling on a national consortium with Robert Marzano.

Participant III: Kristen

Kristen’s was the final pilot study interview. She was difficult to schedule because she was so busy at the time directing the school “cabaret” show. This was an activity she volunteered to keep going after the two long time directors retired. She also served on the school leadership team, was a department chair, and worked very well with her diverse colleagues in the science department. She was in the process of writing curriculum for a national educational science film. She enjoyed singing in the church choir and the social time she initiated and continued to implement between church services. She started this social time because “we weren’t having enough community in the church.” When asked how she acquired all these responsibilities, she said “I volunteered” as she motioned to point a gun at her head [while smiling ruefully]. After having her children, Kristen went back to school to become a teacher and had been teaching for 17 years. She had also received the same teaching award as Hillary. After

the interview she shared how nervous she had been and thanked me for making her feel relaxed.

As a result of these pilot interviews, I learned the importance of establishing rapport with the interviewees to make them feel comfortable during our interview. I learned to explore statements and observations by the interview participants. I came to naturally start the interviews with what the pilot study teachers were presently doing so I revised the order of the interview questions. I also added questions relating to preservice teacher leadership concepts, challenges in teacher leadership, the role of the principal, seniority, and passion.

Research Participants

The research participants were teacher leaders who had graduated with a master's degree from a university-school partnership program entitled Educational Psychology: Professional Development for Teachers (MAE). The eight teachers that returned the email questionnaire met the criteria of active teacher leaders and were interviewed for this study.

Participant IV: Kim

Kim, a 14 year veteran teacher, had a quiet manner as she invited me into her small classroom off the middle school library. She taught talented and gifted students in the Expanded Learning Program (ELP) and her class location near the library was ideal. Kim had taught ELP programs at both the high school and middle school for her first nine years and then became full time at the middle school. She also worked with teachers and teams to incorporate differentiated instruction. Kim was just back from a month overseas

participating in a teaching exchange program that she had organized. It was very successful and will happen again in the future. Kim shared that she “raised herself” as an only child whose parents divorced when she was 13 years old, resulting in her mother working second shift during her junior and senior high school years. When Kim was asked what she was most proud of she replied: “The thing I am most proud of in terms of leadership is my family. I have raised five children. This is the most important thing in my life.” She also was a nurse who went to school to be a teacher while all her children (ages 2-12) were at home. When I remarked on this, Kim said that school was easy for her. I appreciated Kim’s strong character and professionalism because after our interview she was staying late to prepare for a substitute teacher to cover her classes due to unexpected surgery the next morning.

Participant V: Jenny

Jenny was not much taller than her pre-kindergarten students and she fit in quite nicely in her colorful classroom with small scaled furniture. She had been teaching preschool and kindergarten children in private and public schools for 20 years. Her neighbor, Kim, had talked her into applying for the MAE program at the state university so they could do the program together. Many of Jenny’s personal activities centered around her children while they were growing up and she most enjoyed the times she and her husband worked on projects together. Jenny credits her mother and her husband as leadership role models. Her mother had a successful at-home beauty products business and her husband had administrative business responsibilities. Jenny was also youth director for her church and received extensive religious and leadership training in this

area. She had been involved in different social organizations such as Welcome Wagon (organization to welcome new residents to the area), scouts, and PTA (Parent Teacher Association). Throughout our interview, Jenny was lively and talked freely and passionately about her interests and commitments.

Participant VI: Cinda

Cinda was in her 12th year of teaching and was encouraged by her teaching partner, Kim, to apply for the MAE program. She quickly became an active cohort member with Kim and was buying supplies after our interview for an all school celebration. She taught seventh grade reading and language arts, and computer technology. She was on committees to write curriculum and enjoyed the benefits of conferences on technology and differentiation in New Orleans and Las Vegas. Cinda saw these trips as validation for the time spent on leadership efforts. Her college level work continued as she finished her middle school endorsement. On a personal level she was most proud of the facts that she established vacation Bible school in her church and was a scout leader for her daughter.

Participant VII: Tara

I recognized Tara immediately when she came up the stairs at the public library. Our daughters had been classmates in elementary school before their family moved to another district. We spent some time sharing our children's activities. Tara took time off to raise children and had been teaching a total of 15 years. She presently taught second grade and will continue or "loop" with these students next year. As the youngest of eight children, Tara rarely talked while she was growing up. She credits her mother with

helping her out of her shyness, and her high school psychology teacher with encouraging her to go to college. This teacher had a profound impact on Tara and she called him “my guide.” He told her “you have the potential to go to college. You have the potential and skill and don’t let anyone tell you that you can’t.” As a teen, Tara organized a clean up day in their small community that is still going on at this time. Tara was now the family member who organized all their reunions and celebrations even though she is the youngest sibling.

Participant VIII: Carol

Carol was the youngest research participant. She had taught for two years in Minneapolis and then moved back to her husband’s home area to be near his parents as they started their family. She had been teaching for six years and her children included a baby and a preschooler. Carol went to Minneapolis after college to work because her mother had told her while she was growing up, “You are not going to be a teacher like I am. You will make more money.” While in Minneapolis, Carol decided to follow her personal dream to become a teacher and applied at the university. The teaching program was master’s level and Carol waited to tell her parents until after she was accepted into the program. Carol had many experiences during her first college years which included being a nanny and working with church youth groups that took her from her home and friends during the summer and placed her in new situations. She credits her teaching years in Minneapolis with providing many learning opportunities, “the experience was great. Really great people there and it was a good place to start my teaching. It was hard, a very hard area in Minneapolis. The kids were hard; the families were hard. As a

professional, it was a really good experience and that is the direction I have gone.” Carol worked at a school “in need of improvement” with at-risk students. She believed the teacher leadership program helped her interact with older teachers in a respectful but not intimidated way.

Participant IX: Melanie

Melanie had two masters and recently finished her administrative endorsement. She laughed as she shared that her first child was born during her first masters, her second child was born during the second masters, and then she had a third child but not another master’s degree. The children were ages eight, four, and two. Melanie got up at 4:30 every morning and read until 6:30. Her husband was a great support. She had been teaching for 12 years, always in Special Education and primarily with students with severe behavior disorders. Because of her expertise, last year Melanie helped with discipline and interventions in student behavior situations. She was animated and expressed herself with great vigor and feeling as she shared thoughts about her undergraduate college work:

As an undergraduate I was not comfortable in front of people. I wasn’t comfortable as a student speaking. I’d get really nervous and I would sweat. My voice would quiver and I would just get really uncomfortable. But there was a part during undergraduate you had to take drama, which I was petrified that you had to take a drama class and act. I was determined that I could do it. That I knew this was a skill that I had to have. I had to be able to stand in front of people and I made myself do it. I still get visions in my mind right now about standing there quivering and shaking. Trying to do something that was the hardest thing I had ever done but I made myself do it. That really, I think, was the start. I had an expectation for myself. That I was going to be successful in this way. I kind of was raised with very hard lines and those idioms and sayings in my family were things like if you can’t run with the big dogs, stand on the porch. If you can’t handle the heat, stay out of the kitchen. There’s lots of these statements that my parents had said to me and I was a really good kid and kind of

quiet and didn't want to rock the boat and didn't always want to confront things. I wanted to be the good girl and be liked and do what I was supposed to do.

Melanie's future next year will take her out of the classroom and into administration. She hoped that next year she will be able to grow. "Change is hard for everybody. I hope it will be a good experience for me. It's a stepping-stone, as I'm reminded."

Participant X: Lee

Lee had taught for 27 years, in two states, at elementary levels including kindergarten, first, second, and fifth grades. She taught fifth grade while she was having her three children because it was an "easier" level to teach and then went to the lower grades as her children became teens. Teaching in the lower grades was "non-stop" with no breathing room. Presently Lee was just finishing her administrative endorsement and was not sure if she will be teaching or in administration next year. She had been fulfilling the "lead teacher" role in her school which she described as an administrative internship position. The lead teacher was given time out of the classroom to support the principal in different requests. Some of the things she did as lead teacher included serving on the building improvement committee, Partners in Education committee (school and community group), coordinating the revision of the intervention room plan, and in charge of the school's extended day program (primarily for at-risk students) which included planning activities and staffing for the program. Lee's personal leadership experiences developed in her church when she started singing at eight years old and then continued into college with a variety of church oriented activities. Lee stated her college expectations for her children: "As a matter of fact I told my children that they really need

to understand the reason they are going to college. It is for the education, not to run everything. It isn't to be involved in every committee."

Participant XI: Alex

As I interviewed Alex, she revealed many layers of her experiences and personality. In California, she began dancing at age three, taught dance as a junior high school student, and then owned a dance business after high school. Alex reported:

Then I took some big detours, big detours! X-ray technology, dental hygiene, court reporting. Because I thought I needed to have a grown-up job that was workable with the economy. What was something that was going to be marketable? So I went into all the other fields and experimented and found out that they didn't really suit me well. Then I got married and stayed home for a while with my kids and I got divorced and so when I came back to Iowa I wasn't licensed in this state so it was, "What do I do now?" So I went back to school; got licensed. To be marketable, I did special ed., reading endorsement, all of those things that you could pick up so that you could be massively marketable. I ended up working at my first school in special needs with a very needy population of students and parents. It was a baptism by fire. I had 22 special needs students in the course of my day. None of them were self-contained but I had all of them at least three hours throughout the day. That was 22 kids, three hours a day with no assistant. And 11 of the 22 lived in the same house so they had no understanding of personal space or those kinds of things. So it was really challenging to be able to go teach in that environment. I'm surprised I was still in teaching after the first year.

Alex had been teaching for seven years, in three different schools, with K-fifth grade special needs students. Her volunteer experiences of working in a battered woman's shelter, answering suicide phone lines, and advocating for sexual assault victims provided extensive insights to helping children in crisis. The recent diagnosis of serious health issue in her child offered further insights and opportunities for helping people and dealing with agencies. As Alex stated:

If you have enough experiences pretty soon you feel confident to take on anything else. The other job I did while in school was design training programs for people

who are doing customer service, so it used a lot of people skills. How do you say things to people when you're telling them no and you have to tell them no in a way that they're going to accept? That kind of gave me a lot of background on ways to cope with people.

The eight teacher leaders who had graduated from the school-university MAE program were unique and vibrant individuals who were interested in sharing their stories relating to their teacher leadership journeys. The stories from the pilot study participants and research study participants will be used in Chapter 4 to analyze teacher leadership experiences and views.

CHAPTER 4

INSIGHTS AND ANALYSIS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore teacher leadership in schools. How is teacher leadership enacted? What are the characteristics of teacher leaders? Who and what influences teacher leadership? A narrative of lives framework was used to interview 11 active teacher leaders. Three coding categories were developed for analyzing these interviews. This chapter will use the coding categories and the words of the teacher leaders to respond to the research questions.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study reflected literature on practices of teacher leadership and practices applied to education from the counseling field. The questions were:

1. What professional experiences did teachers perceive as influencing their development of leadership skills?
2. What personal experiences did teachers perceive as influencing their development of leadership skills?
3. Had serendipity and happenstance influenced leadership development and opportunity?
4. How did the stories of teacher leaders influence their model of teacher leadership?
5. Why did teachers become involved with school leadership?
6. What role did the principal play in teacher leadership?

In this study I set out to understand the current practices of teacher leadership. In the pilot study were three teacher leaders and in the research study itself were eight teacher leaders. I used interview data from all teachers in this chapter to compare and contrast, and interpret and explain the practices of teacher leadership.

Coding categories

The coding categories were developed from the themes that emerged from analysis of pilot study interviews and literature review on teacher leadership. The three coding categories were teacher leadership purposes, acts, and preparations. Purposes of teacher leadership included both personal and school purposes and characteristics of teacher leaders. Acts of teacher leadership included the practices and characteristics of teachers and principals. Preparations for teacher leadership included personal and professional, formal and informal experiences and activities. Serendipity and happenstance, concepts used for years in counseling, were applied in this study of teacher leadership.

Teacher Leadership Definitions

Teacher leadership meant different things to the teachers. Melanie stated, “The purpose of a teacher leader is to find and share knowledge that allows other teachers to grow. It enables teachers to feel comfortable stepping out of the beaten path.” The concept of personal growth was also shared by Cinda, “...giving a support system. Support system and just continual improvement. There’s always growth, there’s always improvement. That needs to happen.” Tara expressed a different aspect of teacher leadership with her definition: “I think a teacher leader is somebody whose goal is to see

students achieve at their highest level and if that means going outside of the classroom, doing research or whatever. Whatever it takes to help your students.”

As the teacher leaders talked about leadership, one of the most vivid descriptions of teacher leadership came from Carol:

If you are all on the same soccer team, you are all on the same playing field, you are all playing the same sport, you are all hoping for the same goal. You have the same purpose but, you know what, you may have a different colored shirt on just so that somebody can go to you with a certain question or something like that, but you’re not any higher. You know what I mean? Because you need somebody that people can go to because if we were all just doing whatever at school it would be completely disorganized. But you need some people that are...you know, you go to them if you have a question or need help or need some leadership or something. But still you all have the same goal, hopefully, and if you’re not, then you need to get off the team. But you do, you all have the same goal. You should all have the same purpose. You should all be kind of on the same playing field. But you shouldn’t have to do everything or wear the same shirt all the time. Otherwise you would get completely burnt out. You know some people can do some things that you could do, but if you don’t ever let anyone do anything then they’re not going to feel their worth in anything or do anything great for the school.

This comparison reflected the equalitarian nature of teachers in general. Teachers viewed all grades and subjects as necessary and important for comprehensive education. They valued the unique skills and talents of all teachers and how all parts were necessary for a positive school environment.

Coding Category: Purposes of Teacher Leadership

Schools have always needed leadership to accomplish their goals. Presently schools are experiencing an expanding need for leadership to meet government mandates and societal needs. Hillary explained this need for teacher leadership:

We need teacher leadership because we need a different way to look at education – we need a new paradigm. It is hard to do because we still have grandpa in overalls who says don’t change a thing and grandma who thinks all kids need a

computer because she took a class at the senior citizen's center. Such a diversity of educational experiences impact views of education. Do we still harvest a crop and need the summer off? We need a big paradigm shift.

The teachers in this study described both personal and professional needs that drove them to become leaders. Teacher leadership interests and abilities strongly mirrored the teachers' dispositions, interests, and abilities. They discussed the characteristics and commitments of teacher leaders

Personal Purposes of Teacher Leadership

Self-actualization. Teachers emphasized that teacher leadership helped them personally grow and learn. Kim said, "You have to keep growing otherwise you would become stagnant." This idea of learning and growing was also reflected by April, who had the most years of experience, a permanent teaching certificate, a master's degree in education, and a specialized endorsement in reading, when she stated: "I continue to take classes as one form of leadership because stagnant isn't good enough." Melanie also was committed to teacher leadership as a means of self-actualization and said:

I wondered why it was not fulfilling for me to be a teacher and do what I do everyday and not find more information. Why was that not fulfilling for me? I think that's a really hard question that teacher leaders ask themselves. I can't imagine that I'm the only one who asked that question. And answered I want more!

Melanie reflected the continual effort the teachers expressed to be the best they could be in both their personal and professional teaching lives.

Achievement and accomplishment. Personal goals of achievement, accomplishment, and satisfaction were shared by April:

I am the reading teacher and so I feel that reading activities are my responsibilities. Plus I enjoy doing this. And I was on the superintendent's

advisory committee, and I really enjoyed that because I like knowing what is going on. That's one reason I do a lot of my leadership.

Hillary was personally motivated to keep her Talented and Gifted Program in front of the staff and administration and she used her visible activities as a teacher leader as a subtle reminder of her educational area and contributions.

Desire to contribute and make a difference. Tara and Jenny were drawn to activities that: (a) interested them, (b) they felt comfortable doing, and (c) had knowledge or research information in the area of focus as a basis for their personal leadership purpose. Lee elaborated on her personal ties between interest, ability, and contribution:

I've always had a feeling or an idea of how things should be organized. I believe children need to be in a very organized environment and you need to think ahead, you need to plan ahead for them to be in a situation that they know what to expect and that they can feel successful in it. I know that in conversations with people in how I approached different situations that was a leadership role. I had very strong feelings about what should happen on the playground. I'm not sure if this happened before or after our son was hurt very badly on the playground, but I know I had some very, very strong ideas about what should be happening, how teachers should be supervising, what our role was as far as how we should be caring for others peoples' children. I would speak up about it, I would share concerns about it. So it came from a standpoint of sharing concerns. Strangely enough, it wasn't until I was getting my masters (MAE program) and did my research paper that I probably became a leader in academic areas. I can look back and tell you I know for sure that my leadership strengths have always been in the organization and the management areas. Just in the way that I believe how children should be spoken to, your demeanor, what we should expect of students. That's my personality. That way just comes from me. But then when I did my research paper on our English language learners, and how that program should look in our schools, and that was a brand new leadership role for me that I took on. I educated myself to meet a need.

The teacher leaders set goals for themselves. The teacher leaders were personally driven and ambitious but the purpose was to enhance their professional lives. They had a strong desire to personally make a difference in their lives and their school community.

School Purposes of Teacher Leadership

Student achievement. The central focus of the educational picture for the participants was student achievement. The primary purpose of their work was to benefit students. Tara said she examined everything from the point of view of how it would improve student achievement. Melanie was focused on student achievement as her journey began.

It was really important to me that if I was going to be teaching in a classroom that had ten students and eight of them were of a different ethnicity then I needed to start teaching in a way that was going to address their cultural needs. That was where my role started. It was a voluntary group. You had to confront your perceptions about diversity. That really stretched all of us in the group.

Melanie further elaborated on the leadership responsibilities of collecting and analyzing data to measure student growth and progress. All of these activities were to benefit students. Hillary stated that teacher leadership was personally and professionally rewarding when she worked collaboratively with colleagues to have an impact on student achievement and success.

Achievement and accomplishment. Teachers expressed that teacher leadership was most meaningful when it improved their classroom teaching and facilitated their work with students. It made this difference by impacting the professional practice of teachers involved in leadership and the professional practice of their colleagues. As Melanie stated:

I feel like I am a professional and have a professional expectation for myself. With that, in a leadership capacity, you can bring that expectation with you. I don't think you necessarily can make people become professional but if you truly believe it in a true conviction and you provide that knowledge available to teachers, lots of teachers will take you up on that. They will see that it's important, will see that knowledge is valuable. It is most satisfying to see others grow, and I mean teachers and students, in their level of confidence in themselves. Whether it's in communicating or participating or just gaining knowledge. Seeing them grow and be excited about it.

Hillary found the most satisfaction in leadership opportunities at the school level rather than at the district level because at the school level teacher leaders have first hand knowledge of influence and results. She also shared that leadership training improved her professional practice and helped her curricular program to grow and be "cutting edge." Lee discussed how teacher leadership primarily grew out of a need. It did not develop because everything was "lovely" but to solve a problem and help teachers be prepared to meet student needs.

Desire to contribute and make a difference. Cinda and her leadership cohort focused on school climate, reciprocal teaching, peer coaching, and "just making sure people are working together, no closed doors." They developed new initiatives to help students adjust to transitions. This cohort developed a plan and met with other schools to share and coordinate curriculum articulation. The types of leadership opportunities that provided the greatest reward for Cinda were those that directly impacted activities and work of the school. These especially included activities that united the staff because "if we're all happy it trickles down to the kids and to everybody working better with the kids and it just goes smoother on a daily basis."

Hillary and Kim, both talented and gifted teachers, shared their professional knowledge on differentiation with their colleagues to help make a difference with teachers and students. They also taught leadership in their talented and gifted classrooms. Alex, a special needs resource teacher, also shared her knowledge of differentiation with her colleagues.

Work of the organization to affect the goals of the organization. The structure of the school and the work of the school were important to the teacher leaders. Melanie said, “I don’t want to know it all and I don’t want to act like I know it all, but I want to be in the know. I want to be prepared. I think that’s what makes the difference between a good quality teacher leader and one that doesn’t desire to be a leader.” Carol also reflected that leadership develops a stronger teacher who understands the larger educational picture. When Lee was asked if teacher leadership improved professional practice, she responded:

Absolutely. I don’t see how it couldn’t if you were aware of being a teacher leader and that you were truly seeing yourself in that role and trying to be positive. I’m so aware of wanting to make sure that I’ve got my ducks in a row. I guess I want to find that balance of not pretending to be something that’s better than anyone else but that if I want people to work with me, to think that I have any credibility, then I need to be somebody that they can trust and that they can respect for what I do in the classroom and in any other position I take.

After about “8 or 10 years” (the second stage) of teaching, Lee started realizing the “things that made the building and teachers work together.” There were things she could do to have an effect on what was happening around her in school. These areas involved teaming and sharing ideas with colleagues beyond individual classroom walls. With this realization, Lee “moved from being just a teacher.”

Jenny maintained that teacher leadership improves professional practice and the work of the organization because “you get to work with adults. Team with other people. You learn about other people’s work and experiences and it just broadens your outlook.” A repeated theme during the interviews was the value of collaborative effort. Collaboration improved school climate and supported teachers in their endeavors to meet challenges and goals in education.

Teacher leaders felt a responsibility for promoting a positive school climate and learning environment. Jenny stated one purpose of teacher leadership was “giving a support system and continual school improvement.” Leadership activities that directly impacted building staff collaboration promoted unity and helped create professional learning communities. Jenny continued, “If we’re all happy it trickles down to the kids and to everybody working better with the kids and it just goes smoother on a daily basis.”

One teacher leader cohort completely revamped an all school activity to improve its format. The first year only a handful of teachers got involved with the activity. The following year 90% of the faculty got involved in the after school hours volunteer event. Cinda’s most recent leadership responsibility involved volunteering to join the committee to rewrite the reading curriculum. When asked if she had a problem saying “no” she responded, “I didn’t want to say no to it because I’ve complained enough about how it is, and no it doesn’t work, so when you have the chance to be part of making the change then I had to jump on that one.”

Teachers discussed the lack of extrinsic rewards for teacher leadership. One stated that you cannot expect a “pat on the back” for every activity. They also mentioned

that teacher leadership is not for teachers who follow the contract hours from “7 to 3.”

Teacher leadership is hard work that strongly impacts the school. Hillary reflected on the collaborative culture of teacher leadership, “We collectively arrive at answers. It is the forum to do this...valuing the individual and their role.” The collaboration encouraged all view points to be considered and the solutions were more powerful as a result of this effort and work.

The collective efficacy of the teachers was stimulating and powerful, and a positive influence on school climate. Teacher leaders were focused on helping students achieve in their programs from Pre-K through ninth grade, which was a student age span from 3 years old to 15 years old.

Teacher Leadership Characteristics

Teachers involved in leadership drew on their personal stories to express the characteristics of teacher leaders.

Strengths. Teachers stated they needed to be team players combined with the ability to step out and lead. Being able to respect the views of others and validating their views was critical to team membership and teacher leadership. Kim used the oxymoronic phrase “nice manipulation” as part of her description of teacher leadership characteristics.

She stated:

You have to be open-minded. You have to be flexible and adaptable. You also have to keep your eye on the end result, the big picture. And be able to stay focused and bring focus back to everybody else when they get off task. You have to be able to refocus people without being pushy or a know-it-all or pulling the power thing. I guess you have to be manipulative but you have to do it nicely.

Other dispositions teacher leaders offered during the interviews were personal skills that were important for the work of the group. These included being pleasant and positive; respectful and tactful; committed and hard working; able to listen and communicate; open to new ideas; and the ability to clarify, summarize, and collaborate. Organizational skills and the capability to delegate were also mentioned by the teachers during interviews as necessary skills to manage classroom time and group leadership time commitments.

Passion. Eight teachers brought up passion [before being asked] during the interviews as the most important personal attribute for teacher leadership. One teacher leader mentioned passion three different times. April volunteered: “You have to have passion. Maybe not a skill, but the wanting to learn. You want to learn, you want to share, you want to work with people, you want to make a difference. It is this passion that makes the difference.” When asked what her first mentor saw in her, Melanie responded: “I think passion and commitment and truly a love for my students. And the ability to believe in them.” Alex stated the difference between a teacher and a teacher leader was passion. When asked if passion played a role in teacher leadership, the three participants who did not volunteer the idea of passion discussed it as extremely meaningful.

Weaknesses. Teacher leaders were also quick to recognize areas for improvement. One teacher mentioned she needed to delegate more; another teacher wanted to be more tolerant of teachers who did not work as hard as others. Kim stated that her shortcoming was “I don’t suffer fools greatly.” Her goal was to be “very kind,

say this is how things will be done now. In the future if you want to take it over that's fine."

Teacher leaders' vision. Lee summed up the characteristics of a teacher leader as being able to see possibilities and the big picture. She elaborated:

A good teacher leader needs to have the skill of being diplomatic. Thinking about how you talk to people. I think you need to be able to really believe in something. I think that absolutely has to be part of it. That you believe that you see the glass half full. I think you absolutely have to be a positive person and that you're almost ridiculously optimistic. I think to be a teacher leader you have to be able to look at what could be. You need to be able to look at things from every aspect...thinking outside the box is a very worn out term but I think that's how you have to look at things. You have to not be limited by what you see right now but instead...teacher leaders have to be able to say, "What are we trying to accomplish." And really be able to focus on that and feel free to look at ways to accomplish it. It has to be outside your classroom, it has to be working with a group and really feeling like you are part of a group. I think you really have to value everyone that you work with and look deeply at what they bring to the table. And realize that if you don't have all those people you don't have the professional learning community that you need. That you need every one of those people. My faults, their faults, all of ours.

Lee's statement of teacher leadership acknowledged that teacher leadership is accomplished through both an individual and a group effort. The statement also highlighted the advantages of a group of teachers working together. Teachers bring complementary skills and abilities that enhance the group.

Coding Category: Acts of Teacher Leadership

The acts of teacher leadership by the study participants extended beyond classroom walls to grade and subject level teams, schools, districts, and state committees. One teacher leader extended her teacher leadership internationally through the development of a teacher exchange program with an eastern European country. The successful exchange will be continued for a second year. Leadership by the teachers in

the study was more than positions or roles; it was beliefs and actions which involved working with others to affect the professional community.

Practices

Collective efficacy. Collective efficacy is the belief that the work of the group is powerful, synergic, and can overcome obstacles. The idea of teacher efficacy was expressed by Cinda: “We know the old saying that two heads are better than one. And two heads can accomplish much.” The concept of teaming to share ideas and help each other was a common theme among the teacher leaders. Kim reflected, “I couldn’t let her do that by herself...I had to help her out.” In Carol’s school there are:

Three different grants going on right now...so you can be as big of a leader as you want or you can really take a back seat. There are so many needs you can be as busy as you want. You are needed all of the time. The really fun time comes from sharing ideas.

The teachers knew that joining together created a dynamic climate for change leadership. Melanie said, “It’s a community. You don’t have to do this by yourself. We have a connection and a relationship.”

Dispersed leadership. April indicated there were many opportunities for committee membership and leadership in a small school district. Teachers in her small district understood they needed to “take their turn” on different committees. April encouraged new teachers on a committee because this meant “new blood and new commitment. If you’re on a committee, you’re committed. Committee membership, however, should not be ‘till death do you part.” Kristen also found that new people on committees bring fresh ideas and excitement. People have different ways of looking at things and it is important to involve staff, especially new staff, to generate new ideas.

Professional learning community. Teachers discussed how the school community functioned to support the work of the school. Melanie stated: “I would like to see everyone actively engaged in professionally making this community be the best it can be.” Originally Melanie got involved by “just actively being a part of the community and participating on different committees. Initially trying to gain more information about the teaching profession.” Her involvement grew “step-by-step” from committee member to committee facilitator. Teachers thought being a committee member important and they took that responsibility seriously. Committee membership was also a stepping stone to committee leadership. Hillary stated, “The secret of teacher leadership is to get teachers to feel like part of the team.” Tara and Kim affirmed that teachers all have their own strengths and weaknesses that can complement the committee makeup. Melanie explained:

Any good team, you cannot have all the same kind of people on any good team. You have to have thinkers, you have to have doers, planners, you have to have people to find resources, and you have to have people who think in very diverse ways to stretch the box. Not everybody can be the same.

Jenny discussed the effect of structure on teacher leadership. Both the physical school building structure and the organizational structure of the school day have promoted teacher leadership in her school. This happened in the design of their new school building with three wings. Each wing or “house” has certain grade levels. One wing houses K-1 students, the second wing houses grades 2-3, and the third wing houses grades 4-5. During the school day, the schedule supports time for teachers in each house to meet. Jenny explained:

There are enough special teachers (i.e., music, physical education, and art) that the kids in a house can all go to specials at the same time, freeing up the teachers for working together. It may even be just 15 minutes depending on what the special is, but it makes it very easy for them to work together plus they're located together. They have common areas in terms of the new design of the school. It wasn't as easy to do before we had the new school. Also, the principal didn't structure the schedule until he had enough specials that this could happen. So a lot of things have worked together to promote teaming of teachers.

With the physical and organizational structures supporting teacher leadership, it has become "systemic" at Jenny's school. It "runs through the houses and it runs through the teams and then it runs through the school." Their practice of teacher leadership was collaborative and particularly satisfying at the building level.

Shared knowledge and collaboration. Hillary found she could have more impact through the less formal committees at the subject level and school level rather than the more formal district oversight committees. When asked where teacher leaders could have the most impact, Melanie expressed this view very emphatically:

On their team. On their team. I think if every good team had a great teacher leader then that would be the impact. In the small group it's intimate and personal and teachers can share frustrations and concerns and work through those anxieties and be able to get more understanding and I think it's in the small setting. In the small group, not in a large committee/staff meeting. I think its (large meeting) a great place to share information but to truly make an impact is in the small setting.

Characteristics

Characteristics of the acts of teacher leadership were the beliefs that the collective faculty would collaboratively join to focus on educational needs and issues in their buildings. The collaborative acts could involve group numbers from two to all staff. Problems were addressed collectively by leaders who were involved through interest,

knowledge, or desire to solve an issue or problem. Relationship between teachers and within groups was at the heart of the practices of teacher leadership.

Kristen reflected that teacher leadership can be overwhelming as it takes time and it is complicated. Her solutions to coping with the stress involved her individual effort: “Sometimes it feels like I’ve gotten in over my head, but then I work that out by knuckling down and it comes out OK. Sometimes I’ve taken on too much. But then I just take a deep breath and just do it.” Teacher leadership provided support for colleagues and inner resolve and resources to pursue leadership activities and responsibilities. The work as a team was at the heart of teacher leadership.

The question was asked in the interviews, “Can all teachers be teacher leaders?” Sixty-three percent of the teachers responded that all teachers could be leaders. Seven teachers believed that all teachers could be leaders; three teachers did not believe that all teachers could be teacher leaders, and one teacher could not decide if all teachers could be leaders. Three teachers mentioned passion in association with being a teacher leader. Melanie expanded her thoughts which do not reflect a hierarchical model:

Yeah, if they desire it. If they feel comfortable. But being a teacher leader comes in very different forms. So how I have created teacher leadership matches my personality but for someone else who’s quiet, who may not be the one that is dominating the conversation in a staff meeting, they can be very reflective and be a leader in their terms and be the driving force in their terms about teaching strategies and about what research is saying and finding new strategies to benefit instruction. It comes in very different forms. I can be a teacher leader but that doesn’t mean I’m in charge. I can help facilitate but I don’t need to be the one that’s the one taking control or directing it. I can be the one saying, “yes, good job! Excellent job finding that! Thanks for bring that to our attention.” I can be their cheerleader in a sense and praising and recognizing teachers in that way.

Table 6 presents a summary of the teachers' responses to the question of leadership capacity.

Table 6

Can All Teachers Be Teacher Leaders?

	Years Teaching	Don't Know	No	Yes
<u>Pilot Study</u>				
April	32			X if have passion
Hillary	20	X		
<u>Research Participants</u>				
Alex	7		X	
Carol	8		X	
Cinda	12		X	
Jenny	20			X driven by passion
Kim	14			X if someone brings out leadership, all teachers are leaders, can't teach without being a leader
Lee	27			X if have passion
Melanie	12			X if have passion
Tara	15			X if it is something you want to do, will be willing to give time to it

MAE program supports teacher leadership. The research participants who graduated from the MAE program affirmed that program's role in helping them identify their teacher leadership capabilities. The collaborative teaming activities in the courses of study provided a framework for working together. It enabled the teachers to hone their leadership knowledge and skills with a supportive group.

Undecided and negative views if all teachers could be leaders. Hillary was undecided if all teachers could be leaders. She acknowledged that teachers lead in their classrooms but did not know how to get all teachers involved in leadership outside their classrooms. The two youngest teachers in chronological age and the three teachers with the fewest teaching years answered no to this question. Cinda elaborated on her negative answer:

I think it's still wanting to go above and beyond. Willingness to there's a better way to do things or there's change or there's always someone who has new ideas or something new to try. It's fun to bring new things into the classroom, innovative things. I mean it's easier to just do what you did previously. Pull out the notebooks. But that's the easy way out and it doesn't provide the student with what you're supposed to ultimately be there for. So I guess no, probably not.

Carol explained her negative view:

No, I don't think so, because I think you can get along with everyone and you can say yes to a lot of things and I think you can still be a hard worker. But I think if you don't have goals or know what the expectations are or the standards that need to be accomplished I don't think they are a very strong teacher leader.

The third negative response came from Alex who had the least classroom teaching experience. She struggled with negative feelings regarding teachers who do not work as hard as she thought they should and "not holding other people to the same expectations I have for myself."

The egalitarian view of teachers did cause difficulties for the teacher leaders and they candidly discussed concerns and issues associated with acts of teacher leadership. Teachers encountered problems and issues within teacher leadership practice. Problems included time, lack of flexibility in the school structure, and personal relations.

Constraints to Teacher Leadership

Personal family constraints. Teachers with families and other personal obligations discussed the time commitment and “juggling” between family and school. The teachers had learned to appreciate flexibility with leadership periods. Teachers focused on meeting family needs when children were young or involved in activities. Lee simply said, “Then I had young children and I really didn’t volunteer for anything. I remained strong in what I believed but it was unspoken.” Hillary did not get involved when her children were little. She began accepting more leadership responsibilities “at a time when my kids were at the age where it was possible to do it. I don’t think if it had been at an earlier time I would have gotten involved.” When April’s colleagues were encouraging her to assume a leadership position that would involve national travel, they assured her they were willing to be “Aunts for your six year old while you are out of town. We want you to be the one to do this and we will help so you can.” Melanie can only do what she does because “my husband is the most supportive man in the world.” As family needs became less demanding, teachers had more time for school commitments. Jenny’s leadership also “ebbed with my family” as there were times when her family situation needed her at home more with her kids and so she did not do “extra things.”

Personal age constraints. Interestingly, Jenny reflected that “now I am in my late 50s and I am not doing as much as I did. I am just not as excited about school and willing and wanting to team and work with different things.” April is also not taking on as much leadership as she did because “I want to encourage the younger teachers to get involved. I won’t be around forever and so I am consciously stepping back. But I miss it.” Jenny discussed the “overload cost of teacher leadership and the up side benefits.” Teachers can bow out when they are busy and come back to leadership when time permits.

Professional time constraints. Time was the most frequently mentioned teaching concern. Teacher leadership took time away from students, time out of the school day, and personal time after school hours. Ironically, one teacher stated, “Quite frankly my teacher leadership takes time away from the very students that I am trying to help with my teacher leadership commitments.” Another teacher mirrored the same thought: “I think the time constraint is so hard for all the things that they expect us to do and want us to do. When you want to do a better job and you just don’t have the time to do that in your classroom it seems like because you’re on so many other committees.” Tara touched on issues including time and family for teacher leaders:

I think that’s the biggest constraint for a leader is the time because if you had more time... You have to teach, that’s our job and you’re a leader in your classroom but you would really like to get out and share and do other things and it always comes on personal time so then you have to decide what is your balance. We have two wonderful leaders in our building and they have young children now and they’re finding how hard it is to do anything after school. It’s the stage of your life that you’re in.

Professional relationship constraints. The teacher leaders were concerned about relationships between themselves and other teachers. The exercise of teacher leadership was not always smooth and easy. These concerns were expressed by Cinda:

You have to be real tactful to certain people as far as not making it seem like you have control of something that you really don't have control over or what your ulterior motivation behind it really is. That it is to make it better for everyone else and that you're just not all about "here look what I've done." Those types of things. You definitely run into some negativity to what we're doing. All the things. We're always open to everybody who wants to join us. Also it's the follow through too. Some people have great ideas but they never follow through on it. So we've been caught in the middle this way. We've had to go and clean up.

Both Lee and Melanie described the concerns as "tricky." Lee shared these thoughts:

It is a frustrating position to be in because the more leadership roles you take on and the more you're given, you look at things with a different perspective, and you start thinking of ways that the building could improve. Keeping the trust of the staff is part of a gray area because you have an interest in moving the building forward, and ideas how to do it, and share, and wonder what is your role and how much to move on. Realizing that you take risks, you're going to make mistakes, and your mistakes are going to be in front of everybody. That's the tricky part. When are you a teacher and when are you a leader?

Melanie stated that it was tricky to be a teacher leader and "you can't be arrogant and narcissistic and be a good teacher leader. That's a piece that can't be there." Hillary also shared that teacher leadership can be a personal and a professional risk. She elaborated:

I think a leader has to be comfortable with saying, "Wow I messed up. I thought that would work but I guess I was wrong." I don't think people are willing to follow if you are not willing to admit to being human and making a mistake. Look at it as a teachable moment, learn from it, and move on.

Teachers encountered pettiness and jealousy from others. One teacher explained: "They [staff] were not willing to help us [leadership cohort] until one time when they needed us to present an unpleasant issue to our principal. Then they were all happy about

what we were doing.” Another teacher frankly stated teachers were very supportive when “you were willing to do their dirty work for them.” This teacher further elaborated on the pitfalls of being a teacher leader:

It is a minefield. Being a teacher leader I think sometimes the more leadership roles you take on and the more you’re given, you look at things with a different perspective, and you start thinking of ways that the building could improve. So not only are you looking at all those improvements that could be made but I think sometimes you start seeing some of those deficits as well and you start thinking, “It’s like I shouldn’t have been educated because now I know what it should be.” That’s a frustrating position to be in. So knowing when your role is to share with the principal that you have a concern because sometimes principals want you to give them feedback because you’re still a teacher and you’ve got information that they don’t have. So keeping the trust of the staff but because you have that interest in moving the building forward and you see what could be moving you forward in a better way, then knowing when to go, and how to do it, and share, and what your role is. And I think that the biggest thing, what my role is and when to move on to... When have I done enough leading here, when is it time to listen?

Professional experience constraints. When asked the question, “Are other teachers supportive of teacher leadership at your school?” Hillary thought the younger teachers were more excited about collaboration than the older teachers:

The younger teachers are more open – it is a more acceptable thing to have others come in your room, watch you teach. This may be from their educational experiences at college, I don’t know. Older teachers are still comfortable with being told what to do. The reasons could be any number of things. They have always taught in a top down experience. At this point in their career, they want to coast to the end. They are still doing a good job of teaching but not as open to innovation and new ways and collaborative things. They may be threatened by others using their materials. They may be afraid others might find something wrong with them as a teacher. And it may be that they are just a reserved generation.

Collaboration is an integral aspect of teacher leadership and one of the items listed by the teacher leaders during interviews. Restraint in this area affects the acts of teacher leadership.

Professional administration constraints. Cinda shared that a constraint to teacher leadership was “definitely an administrator that’s too controlling and doesn’t want to delegate things or leave things up to some other people or bring in other ideas. That would be something that’s not going to help out.” The principal was the “make it or break it” factor in teacher leadership. How the principal defines leadership determines the structure of leadership.

The Principal’s Role in Teacher Leadership

The principal is responsible for the school’s organizational and functional structure. The teacher leaders in the study all affirmed that the principal was responsible for creating the conditions that either supported or did not support reframed teacher leadership in the school building. Principals were one of the reasons teachers became engaged in leadership. Two of the three teachers in the pilot study group mentioned that at some time early in their career they had a principal whose direct request for leadership responsibility motivated them to accept a leadership role. April said one of her principals recruited her for different leadership positions. One time this principal said, “I want you on this committee so figure out how to get the position.” Five of the eight teachers in the research group mentioned being urged by their principals to enroll in the school district-university MAE program for formal leadership education. Tara said “no” when first approached by her principal to join the program. But her principal persisted and “explained what things she saw as the vision of our school and how we could help make that vision happen.” Melanie was urged by her principal to joint the MAE program

because “you could have impact.” It was very powerful for teachers to have their principals encourage their leadership work in this manner.

Collegial and collaborative. Teacher leadership and principal leadership are mutually important to each other. Teachers work under pressures for student achievement on a daily basis. All the teacher leaders believed the challenges were best met and accomplished by teams of teachers and principals working together. Hillary stated that “no one person can or should be expected to do it all” and further discussed the roles and challenges of the principal:

No matter what, the principal is seen as the leader of the building. You have to respect him or her as a leader. But he or she needs to know when to not be the person in charge and allow your team/staff to collaborate and move the body forward as a team. If the building leadership team feels like a rubber stamp – will create problems. If it feels like the principal is the elephant in the room – loose collaboration. Walk a very fine line. Expect them [principal] to bring answers. But we as a group want autonomy. Very hard to be a principal. Principals burn out if they think they can do it all. Principal and team member – big challenge to be a principal and a team member. Principals all have an ego – they all need to learn how to handle it.

When asked if principals realize how much they need teacher leaders, Carol responded:

I do think it depends on the principal. Depends on what kind of personality they have. If they want to be a do-it-all or whether they like to delegate work or not, I think they realize at some point probably when they’re swimming for the top and can’t make it. Really I think it depends on the principal. I think it depends on how much your school has going on too. We have our principal and then we have a lead teacher who is our assistant principal. We couldn’t survive without that position.

Kristen offered her view of the role of the principal in teacher leadership:

I think it’s important that the principal be involved, without taking control, allowing the leadership group to work with him on solving problems. I think it’s a shared responsibility. And I think that’s the same with even just the principal in everyday goings on. I think it shouldn’t be a dictatorship, it should be, you know, working together mutually solving problems. Any problem, whether it be with

students or something that the teacher themselves is doing that needs to be changed...mutually agreed on. The principal needs to guide and be realistic. Be realistic with their team, with anything that's going on. They need to be not trying to set, "We're the best kind of thing" but be real realistic with, given the facilities they have and the students they have, what kind of goals can be attained.

School climate and culture. Principals create the conditions in their schools that promote the school climate and culture. Melanie shared this insight regarding her principal:

She believed in facilitating her principalship as a community. She knew ultimately she was responsible but she believed in sharing responsibility and the role to everyone who was willing and able to participate in decision-making. She said you are as good as the people you surround yourself with. I since then have heard our superintendent say that too, which is really important. You used to have to be knowledgeable of a lot of things and of everything, but you don't have to know everything. That's why you surround the people who are around you with the strengths that you might not have.

One school I went to the principal was young and arrogant and narcissistic and wasn't a community member. Thought he could do it all and maybe that comes from being young or maybe that comes from his experiences, I don't know, but it was very difficult to work like that and not be allowed to be a part of something and to be a community member. So for two years I wasn't allowed to lead outside my classroom. That wasn't working for me. He didn't want that. If something would go really well in the building he would be at meetings saying, "Yea, way to go teachers, you did a great job!" But I would hear him out of the building praising himself for what a great job he did. I think a good leader also has to be humble and give credit where credit is due. That was a really bad experience for me and I think it kind of reminded me that it's really not about me.

Kim stated her principal:

Has a pretty good handle on what strengths and weaknesses different people have so depending on what she [principal] needed, I think she would go to different people. I think you have to have a supportive principal. I think you need to be on the same page about what you're doing.

Cinda reflected on the teacher leadership climate at her school under two different principals:

Basically when we started the cohort group the administrator that we had at the time just let us come in and do whatever we wanted to try. He was very supportive of working with the MAE program at that time so we got to try a lot of ideas. But I think it really was at the time period when the staff morale was kind of low, on the low end, and we had some negative things going on. So we could see the change that we'd like to attribute it to was the things that we did. But who knows? There were some things that we definitely tried that we thought brought more cohesive staff together.

We have a different administrator now and they're pretty much as supportive as things but maybe not as free will. A few more checks and balances. But if we come up with the idea and run it by her and can justify everything we want to be done, we pretty much can do things.

Dispersed leadership concerns. Lee, who was hoping to move into administration, shared concerns about how teacher leaders acquire their role:

Using your teachers as leaders is very delicate. That you as a principal have to really identify roles for them and you really have to have a common philosophy between the principal and the teacher leader. It can't be one person sharing an idea and the principal asking them to elaborate on that without it being really the belief of everybody; so the teacher leader might do some of the legwork. Certainly sometimes you drive idea. But the principal has to be the one that follows through and makes sure it happens and be the first change facilitator. The teacher leader can be the second change facilitator but unless that job is designated as yours and you are given the authority, I don't ever want to say power but the authority, to be the second facilitator of change, it isn't your role. You have to be given that role and I think that's some of tricky parts of being a teacher leader.

Mentor. Teachers discussed that many leadership positions are chosen by the principal either by direct personal request or by choosing through an application process. April had encountered many situations during her 32 years teaching career. Early in her career one principal recruited her for leadership responsibilities and mentored her professional development. She was encouraged by this principal to "fight for the job." A second principal disliked April due to a misunderstanding during a district public meeting and her "leadership opportunities really dried up and she avoided me whenever she saw

me in the hallway.” A third principal “burnt out” people because her greatest strength was delegating and “instead of spreading out the projects, she picked the same people all the time.” April’s fourth principal did not “believe in teacher leadership” and so “there was no teacher leadership anymore. Nothing.” April reflected that the principal was a major influence in choosing teachers for leadership and in cultivating the climate for leadership to flourish. Principals discouraged teacher leadership by (a) excluding others from leadership, (b) not encouraging a teacher or group of teachers, or (c) only using a particular teacher or group of teachers.

Teacher leaders’ views of principal leadership. As principals promoted teacher leadership, they needed to be aware that teachers had views on how leadership should function. Jenny had been an active teacher leader for a number of years under a principal who had involved many teachers in leadership opportunities. He “didn’t just concentrate on using one teacher except for one time” when there was a teacher, no longer in the school district, who came to school and was upfront in telling the principal, “I want your job.” This new teacher volunteered for everything and because she was very competent, the principal relied more and more on her. She offered excellent technology support to a “technology challenged” principal. Other teachers began to “back off” because she was willing and able to do the work. Jenny said the staff resented her actions. Teamwork was not positive during this time. Fortunately after she left, the school returned to a more positive atmosphere with teachers volunteering and teaming again.

Melanie frankly discussed her views on principal support of teacher leadership when she continued her discussion of an unsupportive principal:

If you [principal] want to be in control of everything it doesn't make it feel like teachers can take risks and try some of the things that are being researched. It makes it harder for teachers to feel comfortable, to step outside the traditional way of teaching. I think in the setting where there is a community and a relationship and connection, teachers feel more comfortable to say, "Hey, I'm going to try this. What's your thoughts?" In an isolated community, I'll call it where everyone has their own little pocket, you don't have that. It stifles growth. It's hard. We did do a lot of great things with positive behavior supports. We made a lot of great changes in our building with that. Not by his merit. We had to have our principal agree. We had amazing counselor and teachers and a committee of people that were committed to making this happen for our school. To change our behavior and our environment, but it wasn't by the principal's decision. I mean, he agreed, but it was that we had 100% staff participate who wanted to do this. It was initiated by an AEA (Area Educational Agency) support staff that brought it to our problem solving committee but he took a lot of credit. He didn't participate in those planning and preparation times. He said, "Yep, let's do it!"

Every year teachers have to go online and do a survey of progress and where we are. We went from 90% management administrator support, to last year was 80%, and this year it dropped to 60% because he wasn't supporting teachers in a way they needed to be supported. It is tricky to be a principal or administrator because you have to balance supporting teachers, supporting children, supporting parents. It's tricky and I grant that, but you have to be there for your teachers because they're the ones in the trenches everyday.

Principals were recognized as the leader of the school. They were responsible for nurturing teacher leadership as a means to create a dynamic school climate and culture. Under this umbrella, staff worked collaboratively to achieve personal and professional goals and to promote student achievement in an era of intense education scrutiny and mandates. Principals and teacher leaders had the dual challenges of leading and being a team member. The interactions and collaborations between the two groups were critical for school climate. Without a supportive principal, teachers would not take risks as leaders in their classrooms or in the school.

Teacher Leaders' Views on Nurturing Teacher Leadership

Lee shared her views on how to nurture teacher leadership:

How do we nurture teacher leadership? It really has to come from the administrator. It has to come from that. It has to be the leaders. I think that it comes from validating what people do and it also comes from encouraging people. Looking at their strengths and really helping people see what their strengths are and encouraging them to pursue those things that they seem to sometimes not even know are their strengths. Looking deeply at who you are working with and as I said, encouraging them in their strengths, helping them to identify them and giving them opportunities and vehicles to share those strengths. You recognize your leaders by building very quiet relationship. Not by singling out teachers. So building relationships quietly is important. Just knowing people, knowing your staff. Just know your staff. I think your staff has to know that you know them. That you are looking at their strengths and that you wanted to take the time to know what their strengths were because you're thinking about teaching and learning. Looking at them as a teacher and at their strength in that area. Look at it like a classroom. All of my students are different and they all need something different from me. But I would say that they would all feel that things are on a pretty equal basis and that comes from developing that relationship with everybody. That's so very easy to do. Then just getting a feel for what people want to do. What is their interest? What are they ready for? What do they want to pursue and knowing that maybe you are very proud of what you do here and someone else might have that desire to branch out in a different area. I think people naturally take on leadership roles.

Lee also shared her views on what has to be in place for leadership to thrive:

It has to be the structure of the whole organization. I think it has to come from a leadership style of where there is definitely a leader because if you don't have an administrator that is the leader then you have a lot of people who want to be leaders and no one really is a teacher leader. They are just a lot of people doing whatever they want to do and there is a difference. I think the structure you set up in your building as far as relationships and just that whole, that we have a common mission. That we have common values and that it's very clear to all of us. I think that in that setting then people understand their roles better and people feel good about their roles and then you have the opportunity for people to be teacher leaders.

The teacher leaders reflected on the challenges they found as leaders in their respective buildings. They were willing to cope with the challenges because the benefits out weighed the confrontations, stresses, and uncomfortable moments. Their practice of

teacher leadership was designed to overcome obstacles and create professional learning communities.

Coding Category: Preparations for Teacher Leadership

The teachers interviewed for this study performed their acts of leadership in a variety of ways and situations. As Melanie stated, leadership “comes in many different forms.” The different activities of the teachers and the list of teacher leadership characteristics exemplify the complexity of teacher leadership and beg the question “how or what prepares teachers for leadership?” The journey maps composed by the teachers and brought to the interviews illustrated both personal and professional experiences and preparations for their teacher leadership roles and responsibilities. Some personal preparation for leadership began in childhood and as early as three years of age. Some teachers did not recognize their leadership qualities and actions until they had a number of years of teaching experience.

Personal Preparations for Leadership

The teachers were instructed to begin their journey map record of their personal leadership journeys at any time in their life. They were to simply begin with what they perceived as influencing their leadership journey. Within this unlimited and unstructured time frame, seven teachers placed the beginning of their personal leadership journey with childhood experiences. The two standout youth experiences were 4-H and church.

Organized club and church activities. Three teachers began their journey maps with membership activities in the 4-H youth organization which is a national youth leadership development program. The Hs represent head, heart, hands, and health. The

organization is the largest out-of-school youth program in the United States and membership ages are from 8 to 18 years old. Youth in 4-H clubs have extensive experience practicing leadership and self-efficacy skills (4-H, 2008). Hillary related her personal journey beginning with 4-H:

I look back on 4-H as an area that got me involved in leadership. I was a junior 4-H member at age 10 when I did a demonstration at the county fair that was chosen to go to state fair. So those kinds of things, back that early, getting up in front of people, while not leadership, it is being in front of people and not being afraid to be a person that people are looking to. I held every office in 4-H. An interesting thing that came back to me that I had kind of forgotten about is that I ran for the 4-H county president and I had this awesome speech. I thought it was great. In my mind I thought I had it sewn up. I was probably over confident or underestimating the elements. Well I lost. And I had to cope with it. And it was like "well you lost." And you pick up and go on. I think my mother was more devastated than I was. But that was something I really wanted to do and I didn't get to do it. I did go on to 4-H leadership conference at the state university one summer. And that was a lot of fun. I did a Y-teen leadership thing program so I got leadership skills and working with people, that sort of thing. I was pretty involved in our church youth group but in my mind I don't remember taking a leadership role in that. But I was part of a group and I think it is important sometimes for a leader to realize what it is to be part of a group. And not be a leader. And so that probably helped me. I was also pretty involved in band as a twirler. I was a college twirler. I was out front again. Different kinds of leading but you have to think about that and how you present yourself and how you think people will perceive you.

Before Hillary was 20 years old she learned how to (a) serve in a leadership role, (b) campaign for an important election, (c) experience a loss of a leadership position, (4) be part of a group, and (d) to perform in front of a large group of people. April and Tara also held 4-H leadership positions. April held "many offices" and affirmed the value at a young age of "standing up in front of people and talking." Tara was president of her 4-H organization for two years. Both April and Tara were very active as members and leaders on their high school student councils.

Church was important in the youth experiences of Hillary, April, Melanie, Lee, Tara, and Jenny. Lee shared her thoughts on forming inner strength, support systems, and leadership:

I look back and think it came from when I was just a young child and we were members of a very small church congregation, and my parents had leadership roles in that very small congregation and we, as children, never had a doubt in our mind that we were a very important part of that organization. We took on roles. We would take up the offering. I sang when I was eight years old at the church and never thought anything of it because that was something that you could do. There were no limitations put on what you could do. I think that role in my church as very much a part of my developing leadership roles. Then as I went on I did have leadership roles in school. In 5th grade I would argue for everyone why we should not have to have our heads down at recess. I would argue for the class how this was not fair and everyday we would get out of it. Then as I was in high school I took on leadership roles, again in my church. I organized weekend retreats and again we were put in that position where we were allowed to do that. So I was on our leadership committee. I was the president of our district youth and it was our district youth group doing these activities. There were many, many young people in that group, so I was given that opportunity to set up where we would go, just all the nuts and bolts of it, had to send out the flyers. Then I went on to college and very much had leadership roles. It very much comes from when I was just a young child.

Tara organized summer camps with other churches for youth groups to attend. She remained active in her church through college and was president of her college church group.

Inherent trait. Lee believed that some of her leadership came from being “just who you are.” There were six children in the family and as adults four are “very much leaders but two have chosen not to be.” Jenny also discussed the inherent nature of leadership as she stated “leadership is inborn in you.” As the middle child she used “leadership to call attention” to herself, developed a “little ego that leaders need,” and “handled criticism which leaders need to be able to do” through her family. Jenny

remembered during grade school in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades she was always the one who organized the recess team games. She “could always get the boys to do what she wanted them to do.” She also was involved at the secondary school level in student council and held “many different offices.”

Volunteer experiences. As adults, volunteer commitments to service organizations and churches were personal leadership activities highlighted on six journey maps. Kristen sang in her church choir and appointed herself in charge of the kitchen.

I started this myself after we remodeled our church. We had this nice, new kitchen and I decided we needed to have treats after church. We weren’t gathering enough as a community. It was nice. Everyone was gathering and the church was growing as a result. People were getting to know each other.

Kristen baked and cleaned up for this by herself and usually arrived home on Sundays after a couple of hours of work. Jenny had been involved in many social and service organizations as an adult including Welcome Wagon (Chamber of Commerce activity to welcome new residents to the area), Cub Scouts, and Parent and Teachers Association (PTA). She was the youth director for her church and said, “That was quite a leadership experience. There was extensive leadership and religious training” accompanying that responsibility. It was during her three year commitment as president of her woman’s service sorority that Hillary learned how to “run a meeting efficiently.” Later, as a member of her City Council, she continued to develop and use this knowledge. Hillary reflected on her personal growth through her variety of leadership experiences:

In the process of leadership you have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge of it. Sometimes have to put yourself into the positions so that you seek out the information so you get the opportunity. So you can get the information. It is a circle.

April served on a Head Start board, an educational board at a university, and a museum board. She had been a member of a women's service sorority for 35 years holding offices including President and taught adult Sunday school for 19 years. Tara received leadership training from the Kauffman Foundation of Kansas City when she worked for the State Extension Department.

Family experiences. All of the teacher leaders were wives and mothers. Six of them shared that organizing and managing their families were important leadership activities. They devoted time and energy to their families and homes, and included this information on their personal leadership journey maps. Kim said, "I think you have to like what you do. The thing I am most proud of in leadership terms is my family. I have raised five children. That is the most important thing in my life."

Families encouraged leadership roles. Kristen credits her father with getting her interested in teaching and working with others. Tara and Melanie had mothers that encouraged them to be "more outgoing" and "easier in front of people." Tara was the youngest of eight children and she did not speak for a long time: "I was very shy and had all my older siblings to talk for me." Her mother fostered Tara's leadership as she:

Put me in situations where I would have to speak or have to do something, interact more and more. She got me involved in 4-H and church. I was president of my church league my senior year. Organized camps with other churches and go on outings with them. We were a small congregation so we would connect with other congregations and do stuff with them. It was always congregations where the kids weren't in my school. Because I lived where I lived, in one county, but our church and everything was in another county, so you worked with kids from different schools, which was fun. In our little community I started a clean up day where I got all the youth together and we would go out. My uncle kind of encouraged it because he said he would have a barbeque so we went out and cleaned up the little community and went out into the streets. It's still going on and it's kind of a fun thing. Doing all this I went outside my comfort zone.

Expanding the comfort zone. Stepping outside of their comfort zone, both personally and professionally, was mentioned by five of the teacher leaders. When Hillary was asked to be on a high profile community committee, she “about dropped the phone” and continued the remembrance:

I did a lot of homework before I accepted [the position] because I didn’t know for sure if I was going to be the right match for the position. And then I have just finished being the chair for two years. I *really, really* didn’t want to do that because I didn’t see myself being comfortable running a meeting. Not that I can’t run a meeting but I had to follow Roberts Rules and do all those kind of things, and I wasn’t sure I could do it, but it was one of those things where I had to stretch myself and did a pretty darn good job.

Tara and Kim found the school-university MAE program to be professionally “the one thing that really encouraged us to kind of step out of our boundaries, our safety nets, to push ourselves a little bit more.” These were positive experiences. However, Lee was pushed outside her comfort zone during her first year of teaching when she had:

An unbelievably bad experience. It made me have to figure out what I was made of and what I was going to be an advocate for. And whether I was going to be an advocate for myself, for the children. I guess really evaluate how it all works and maybe developed that strong belief about making sure that the learning community is a good one, for everybody. So I think that from those kinds of experiences that I had to take on that role. But I wasn’t involved in any leadership kinds of things in my first year. I suppose the experience rather than being involved in organizational leadership or any other organized leadership roles. Again I think moved me toward leadership.

Personal and professional, positive and negative, formal and informal experiences were intermixed in the narrative journeys of the study participants.

Professional Preparations for Leadership

Professional development experiences and opportunities were important for every one of the teacher leaders. During the interviews, the teacher leaders were asked

which journey map area, personal or professional, they preferred to use as we began our discussions and explorations of their journey maps. Eight teacher leaders preferred to begin sharing their journey map narratives with their professional journey experiences. Seven of the eight teachers who shared their professional journey maps before their personal journeys were graduates of the MAE program. The eighth teacher was April from the pilot study group. The teachers who shared their personal journeys first were two pilot study teachers, Hillary and Kristen, and Alex from the MAE research group.

A major educational difference between the two groups of teacher leaders in this research study was the experience of the formal MAE program. The research participants graduated with a master's degree in teacher leadership from this program and the pilot study teachers did not have this formal training. The following discussions on professional preparations for teacher leadership are organized by this educational experience.

Professional Development for Pilot Study Teachers

As the pilot study teachers discussed their professional journeys, they used the phrases “powerful professional development” and “research based professional development” frequently. April shared that 30 years ago, in her small school district, they had 10 days of in-service every year. “That was a big deal. That is what the state is up to now. Now all our days [professional development] have to be based on research. We have some pretty heavy professional development.” Her main discipline was from the “powerful research based in-service of twenty-five years ago when William Glasser and Robert Marzano came to our school district. Can you believe that? Our little district

had them before the Area Education Agencies in the state.” Presently in her school district, writing curriculum aligned with standards and benchmarks was the focus of their professional development which improved teaching and “hopefully student achievement.” April regularly attended comprehensive professional development related to her reading curriculum.

Research based professional development. Research based professional development was also important for the other two pilot study teachers. “Powerful professional development” experiences rather than “sit and go” meetings were goals of Hillary and Kristen’s leadership team. Hillary shared:

On our professional development days we have made an effort to nurture leadership. We show we value what our teachers and staff think through activities such as temperature readings, which collects staff feelings on the information presentations, and lots of sharing time. The leadership team gives out the message so our staff sees that what they think is important. Honor the importance of everyone.

Hillary and Kristen used professional development information and experiences to help write curriculum. Early professional development training continued to impact Hillary’s curriculum writing. “I still use HOTS (higher order thinking skills) training from 20 years ago to help write curriculum today. That stuff is still good.” Hillary incorporated personal and professional leadership information in her curriculum:

One of the things as I got into it professionally was my training with the 7 daily habits. That has had a huge impact on my life both professionally and personally. I use the 7 habits daily. I don’t even have to think about which habit it is. Oh – that’s a habit 5C, first seek to understand and then be understood. Habit 5C is the most critical one of the 7 habits. Try to understand where other people are coming from and stand in their shoes before you push to be understood. I think that is a very important habit to live by. I have taught this to my students and I think it is huge. I just see so much value in the 7 habits as kind of a guide book for life and how you live your life and really helps you keep grounded in what’s

important and to be focused on and not let the other things get in the way of your priorities and your mission.

Kristen shared that college professors had a “major impact” on her teaching style. She continued discussing teacher leaders as creative and quick to understand and relate to students. She added:

I also think your desire to go on and get more education and to become involved in lots of different things. If you go back and listen to what you’ve just done, it’s not just teaching. It’s being involved in committees and just making sure their education is up to date. It’s a whole...they’re a well-rounded teacher, involved in lots of different things.

Intense and in-depth professional development. The pilot study teachers preferred professional development experiences that were intense and in-depth. They had their share of “sit and go” professional development that “you never used again.” Hillary explained: “It is that immersion [in professional development] that makes the huge difference. We have had some tremendous opportunities from early days that have been really important to where I am as a TAG teacher today.” All pilot study teachers noted powerful professional development opportunities they had attended outside their school districts. Hillary regularly attended summer leadership symposiums at a distant university, April traveled nationally with an internationally-recognized educational consortium, and Kristen spent summers at meetings in other states. All three teachers wrote curriculum for their departments and collaborated with teachers from other schools and other districts, sometimes using personal time and money to do these projects.

Professional Development for Research Study Teachers

The research study participants were purposefully selected because they graduated from a master’s degree program entitled Educational Psychology: Professional

Development for Teachers (MAE). All eight teachers discussed the important contributions of that educational experience on their school leadership activities. Brief quotes from the teachers highlighted these contributions:

- Actually a lot of the leadership roles that I'm taking have come as a result of the teacher leadership masters program.
- It took going through the leadership program to fully understand my potential.
- I like teaming with other teachers from the same school district. We had common experiences and understand each other.
- Most meaningful thing was just finding out what kind of a person you are.
- A lot of group work was good because you really don't work independently very often.
- Another key thing – everything you do should be for a purpose not just because you're doing it.
- I really *passionately* [italics added] believed I had something to offer when I read a book on professionally learning communities for class.
- I learned a lot from the people at my table because I thought they were really smart.
- The more I was in it, the more I loved it.

Jenny appreciated the fact that the university program was “accommodating and flexible” for the students. The professors listened and tried to meet their needs. Working as teams with teachers from other schools in the district was a surprising success for Jenny. “There are big differences within the school district in terms of school locations

and student backgrounds with concern to different privilege, money, and education,” yet the teachers found they could work on teams together. It expanded their associations and enriched their experiences to represent the district cultured diversity on the teams.

Melanie discussed her leadership development:

I think being a teacher leader or being in a leadership role developed over time as I gained more skills about the impact that you can have. The value of sharing information. The value of helping others find their way. It emerged helped by mentors, skills, coursework. I don't give a lot of credit to the course. I give the content, what I gained, the credit. I can also refer back to my information. Really impact on other people. My mentors guiding me and someone believing that it was possible.

Lee also credits informal teaching activity for leadership development:

I know that before I was doing work on my Masters, my leadership came from the role that I took as leader. It came from voicing, or not only voicing my opinion, but I think that my expectations for my classroom. It was very definitely the way I expected things to be and I know that was a leadership role. I know that people looked at it. That they began to model what they did off of it so it was kind of without me saying or voicing my opinion about something being verbal. I think it was what I did because I feel so strongly about it. My actions. Very early on, I've always had a feeling or an idea of how things should be organized.

Tara's professional preparation journey began with the training she had received in cultural competency through the school district. That made a “big difference in how I related to students.” She continued with her list of activities before the MAE program: team leader, data team leader, organizing awards ceremonies, reading program, report card committee, and starting a parent mentoring group. In the future she plans on cutting back on some commitments so she can go in a new direction that will include more technology.

MAE professional development. Melanie, Lee, and Tara credited the university MAE program as very important in their professional leadership development in addition

to other committees and activities listed on their journey maps. However the journey maps of Kim, Jenny, Carol, and Cinda did not reflect a similar list of professional development experiences before the MAE program. The fact that a resume that included a variety of leadership experiences was required for acceptance into the MAE was not reflected in the journey maps of these teachers. They viewed the master's degree program as their professional beginning of teacher leadership. Kim's journey map illustrated this as the professional section contained the following information:

Only ELP teacher in building – no team for support
Master's program in teacher leadership *led* [italics added] to:

- Cohort group;
- Co-chair of school celebration;
- Co-chair of Dec. 21 activities;
- Push to change job description to include differential instruction with staff;
- Provide in-service to staff;
- Facilitating study groups;
- Apply to Civitans (community service club) program/present to boards;
- Attend summer institute;
- Facilitate in-service for district on Project Citizen (student civics).

After the MAE program, the professional development commitments of the teachers became extensive. Presently Carol is involved as: (a) team grade leader, (b) mentor, (c) Reading First school liaison committee member, (d) district Think Tank committee, (e) student problem solving committee, and (f) grade level representative for special services. Cinda is involved in: (a) cohort activities continued from master's program, (b) Partners in Education committee, (c) Technology committee, and (d) mentor.

The course work and professors in MAE program were important in the professional preparation journeys of the research study participants. In fact half of the research study teacher leaders began their professional journey map with the master's program. This over shadowed the leadership experiences required for program admittance.

Mentor support. Encouragement from other people was responsible for getting teachers involved in the MAE program. Kim signed up for the program to get her masters. She was not necessarily "interested in teacher leadership but tuition was to be completely paid by this district." When the district announced it would not pay tuition Kim remained enrolled in the program and further recruited Jenny and Cinda to help the program have the student numbers required to offer it.

Principals were responsible for involving all the other teachers in the program. Carol said that after her principal suggested she enroll in the MAE program, "It kind of just makes you think; oh somebody has recognized that [leadership] in you. That probably changed my kind of thinking of who I was at school and what I could do." Alex was encouraged by her principal to join the program. Alex shared the principal did not "push or pull" but simply "opened the door to this opportunity."

Undergraduate preparation. The teacher leaders were asked if they realized as an undergraduate that teaching included their leadership activities. Tara said that she had an uncle who was a principal and knew that he spent "a lot of time at school. But I didn't understand about a teacher's leadership. In fact my husband said the other day that he would have been nicer to his teachers if he had understood how hard they worked."

Hillary thought she “understood what teaching was all about” in terms of content in her subject area but leadership in any form [traditional and “definitely not my current practice of teacher leadership] was not a part of her undergraduate preparation. Teacher leadership for the study participants evolved and emerged during their years as practicing teachers. The concept was not part of the undergraduate teacher education preparation programs for any of the study participants.

Serendipity and Happenstance

Career experiences in the work place have been studied by psychologists in the counseling field for unplanned events that affect people in terms of career plans, developments, and paths. Planned happenstance theory was developed by counselors to provide a framework to examine chance events. The purpose of the theory was to facilitate psychologists and counselors as they worked with clients in the area of career development. Counselors wanted to help clients recognize, understand, and build on professional experiences in their work lives. In this study I was curious to discover whether serendipity or happenstance affected the teacher leaders in terms of their paths to leadership. Every teacher leader in this study readily responded that serendipity or happenstance affected their journey in teaching and ultimately in teacher leadership. All teacher leaders could describe their experiences in great detail including dates and personal details. Table 7 provides an overview to serendipity and happenstance experiences in the lives of the teacher leaders interviewed for this study.

Table 7

Serendipity Experiences

	Years	Personal	Professional Experiences		
	Teaching	Experiences	MAE* or Mentor	Professional Development	Other
<u>Pilot Study</u>					
April	32			X	
Hillary	20	X			
Kristen	17	X			
<u>Research Participants</u>					
Alex	7	X			
Carol	8		X		
Cinda	12		X		
Jenny	20				X
Kim	14		X		
Lee	27		X		
Melanie	12		X		
Tara	15			X	

* Educational Psychology: Professional Development for Teachers master's program

Professional serendipity experiences. Kim, who applied for the MAE program because it offered an opportunity to work on a master's degree at an economical cost said, "The cohort masters program. That was the start of it." This statement referred to leadership for her and the MAE cohort at their school. Lee was enthusiastic about her course work in the MAE program as she answered my question about serendipity:

Now my mind is going. I really did have an experience that moved me toward this [leadership]. I really passionately believed that I had something to offer and a vision when I read the Dufours' book about professional learning communities. When I read that I just couldn't get enough of it. It's that effective teaching. It's empowering teachers. It's helping them. It's creating a building atmosphere, and opportunities for teachers to collaborate, and understanding the value of that. I'm loving what I'm doing in the classroom, probably more than I ever have. I have visions of how we can allow other teachers to have opportunities for collaboration, opportunities to have more time. I see ways to open up windows for them. I have such an enthusiasm for it I think this is the moment. This is the time. Reading Dufour was huge. That's when the light bulb came on said, "This is what I could offer because I understand it."

Mentor encouragement. Mentoring was responsible for involving Cinda, Carol, and Melanie in the MAE program. Kim encouraged Cinda to apply as part of their school group. Once Cinda got involved "that was kind of the turning point of getting satisfaction out of what I was getting into. The fact that we had an administrator that was so supportive helped." Cinda was mentored by a co-teacher and their group was mentored by their principal. Carol was encouraged by her principal to apply for the MAE program. Carol shared that this encouragement was very meaningful "because you're kind of like, oh you think I can do it. So that probably changed my thinking of who I was at school and what I could do." Melanie said it was also her principal that encouraged her to apply for the MAE program. "It was really the guidance from someone else who

said you could do this. You could have impact.” These teachers viewed this serendipitous event with optimism.

Professional development opportunities. Tara and April credited meaningful educational professional development experiences as their serendipitous events. Tara was working at the extension office when she was asked to attend training sessions with the Kaufman Foundation in Kansas City. These training sessions were for staff development in after school programs for the national Boys and Girls Clubs. The training, held in Washington, DC, “was just an unbelievable experience. It was an awesome experience. It was first class all the way.” April stated that she was “in the right place at the right time” when William Glasser came to her school district. “That was *very much* [italics added] serendipitous because we were fish in a small pond. How else do you explain the fact that he came to our small district?” Jenny was also in the right place at the right time when her principal was discussing a new grant awarded their school. It was to create a pre-kindergarten classroom. Jenny had reluctantly left teaching preschool in the private sector earlier in her career but remained committed to the concept and need for preschool education. When her principal was going to refuse the grant because “he didn’t know who would teach it and he just saw a lot of complications,” Jenny quickly volunteered to establish the class. She took the risk, built on the serendipitous opportunity, “never looked back”, and loved her classes.

Personal serendipity experiences: Negative. Kristen’s serendipitous experience was a personal nadir occasion that ultimately changed her career path positively. She shared:

I had started college to be a Physical Therapist. I had been going to school for two years. I was married and had four children. It was not a good experience because it was my birthday. And my whole family forgot. And I was so upset that I decided I'm going my own way. I'm going to do what I wanted to do. And that was to teach. So I changed. You know I was interested in science and I was going to teach. But I thought, "No, I'll do physical therapy, that'll bring in more money." And then when my family forgot my birthday it made me start thinking about what was important to me. And it was just like that, like overnight. I went into teaching.

Kristen took a risk and changed career focus. Her father had nurtured a love of science in Kristen from the time she was little and she decided to pursue this love.

Personal serendipity experiences: Professional. When asked if there was a serendipity or happenstance experience in her career that stood out, Hillary took a deep breath, easily gave a date over a decade earlier, and began her story of this important memory:

It was a spring day and it was very nice weather. One of my kids ran out of my room threatening to commit suicide. And of course at that point you drop everything else and that was my focus for the rest of the day. And I was like "I don't think I can do this job. I don't know if I can handle all that is coming my way." And the next day, midway through the day, I got a phone call awarding me an important teaching recognition. I was quite humbled, and knew that had come from a student. I have no idea of what student had nominated me. I also had feedback then that next day from the parents of the young man that had run out of the room. They had found out, and how they felt about that he would do this in my room indicated the trust he had in my room and that he should call out for help. And then when I got home that day, I opened my mail, I am already on cloud nine, and I have a letter from the Presidential Scholar program and that is a program that recognized two seniors each year from each state and they go to Washington, DC and get a medallion. The students who were chosen are to name a teacher who had impacted them. And Mary had named me as that teacher and I really think that perhaps if those two things had not had happened I might have thought, "I can't keep doing this." But I thought after that, that I must be doing something right and should probably continue. It was quite the weather dale I will have in my career for sure. And I don't need to have another day like that because that's a...either one of them is a once in a life time thing and to have both of them... it was huge. I think all of us in leadership need validation. And that was that moment that imprinted on me that I could do that.

Serendipity and happenstance events and situations influenced life choices and career paths of the eleven teacher leaders in the study. Their narratives illustrated that personal and professional experiences influenced professional leadership journeys. They built on these experiences to enhance their professional and personal lives.

The teacher leaders in the research study were dedicated teacher leaders. Reframed teacher leadership legitimacy is earned. It is not granted or anointed. Teacher leadership emerged at different times and through different modes for the pilot study and research study participants. Research documents four paths to teacher leadership: (a) experience, (b) knowledge, (c) vision, and (d) respect for children. The teacher leaders in the study represent these four paths to leadership.

In terms of professional preparation, the three pilot study teachers did not have the formal MAE program that the eight research study teachers had completed. However, the pilot study teacher leaders had extensive volunteer commitments involving leadership activities. One research study teacher had both extensive volunteer experiences that compared favorably to the pilot study teachers and the formal MAE educational master's degree. This juxtaposition leads to further narrative insights and analysis focusing on Alex in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

ALEX'S STORY

Overview

Narrative of lives theory focuses on the stories of human experiences and behaviors as lived and interpreted by each person. As individuals explore their lives or parts of their lives, they reflect and construct meanings to help them and others understand and make sense of their experiences. Alex's story reflects her teacher leadership journey and is shared for deeper insights into the practice of third wave teacher leadership. Alex's personal philosophy of life and teaching, her extensive volunteer commitments, and high caliber teacher leadership activities illustrate reframed third wave teacher leadership.

Alex was a woman with an engaging smile and thoughtful demeanor. She was one of the three MAE teacher leaders with fewer classroom teaching years. However her age matched the teachers with more years of classroom experience. Her teaching assignment was with multi-categorical special needs K-fifth grade students. Alex had been teaching for seven years in her present school district and before that on the west coast. However, Alex had "always worked with children in the age range from three to high school in one way or another" as she began her own dance studio when she was sixteen years old. Alex had extensive experiences as a volunteer and in several other career areas.

Preparations for Teacher Leadership

Personal Leadership Journey

Alex began her personal leadership narrative with dance lessons that started when she was a preschooler. Dance “pushed” Alex into “positions of leadership from the idea when you’re used to performing you’re not afraid to get up and do things.” In fact dance was Alex’s personal serendipitous event.

I wasn’t quite three when my mom enrolled me in dance class and I didn’t get out of dance class until I was around 33. I continued in dancing in one way or another for all of those years. So I think the person who initially got me on the dance road is probably, was very large in forming the person that I became, and she was a very strong personality. She had a lot of positive qualities. I went from the time I was seven years old. I went from school to dance class and stayed at dance class until 9:00 at night every single night. So she had a very, very big influence.

Alex started teaching dance full time when she was in junior high school. While this experience was risky, Alex perceived it optimistically. She believed, due to her dance instructor, that she could plan and direct dance recitals at the young age of 16. Alex “practically lived at the dance studio from 3:00 to 10:00 at night.” She taught every day with her dance mentor and also traveled across the country during the summers presenting dance seminars. After high school, Alex started her dance business. During this time she went back to school and had jobs as an X-ray technician, dental hygienist, and court reporter. Following marriage and children, Alex became a stay-at-home mom and active school volunteer. She recapped her personal leadership narrative:

Anything personal started back in high school when you were doing student council and yearbook and science stuff and all of that. I think the dancing oddly enough had a lot to do with pushing me into positions of leadership from the idea that when you’re used to performing, you’re not afraid to get up and do things. You’re not afraid to go out there and make that choice and make a decision.

Somehow it eliminates that underlying fear that most people deal with and so you just do things and I just think that had a lot to do with it. Running a business when I was very young because I started teaching dancing and running a business when I was sixteen so you made choices, you made decisions. Putting together a dance recital. All those things seem very normal and, at the time, didn't even seem like a big deal, when you're sixteen nothing seems like a big deal. You think you can conquer the world.

Doing those things and having those experiences I think implanted a lot of seeds that then could grow into leadership things in another arena. So that had a lot to do with it. Then when I was a stay at home mom, Anna's school had 1200 students in an elementary school. It was huge. So I did subbing at that time but I wasn't actually teaching so I filled up my time with doing things like PTA president. Planned the fun fair for a school of 1200 kids. It was just like it was a huge school, and there were so many needs and you just knew that you could do it. So you just stepped up. So I kind of took that and the whole victim advocacy. When I first moved back here I was back in school to get certified in the state. One of the jobs I took was working for Family Services League and I worked with battered women and children and I did sexual assault advocacy. So I did a lot of victim advocacy that took being able to stand up and say this is what we need. Because this was people who had lost their own voices for whatever reason and you dealt with the legal system and you dealt with the law enforcement system and you had to be able to stand up. As much as our legal and law enforcement system and our country are great, they tend to run over victims so you had to be willing to get out there and stand up and say, "Stop!" Which I think built up some more...I don't know whether it's just the idea if you feel confident enough, if you have enough experiences, pretty soon you feel confident to take on anything else.

The other job I did while in school was design training programs for people who are doing customer service, so it used a lot of people skills. How do you say things to people when you're telling them no and you have to tell them in a way they they're going to accept? I think that's a big deal in leadership because you have to do that often. That kind of gave me a lot of background on ways to cope with people.

Philosophy of life. Alex further elaborated on the impact of these personal experiences in forming her philosophy of life:

Everything that happens in my life somehow gives a piece of the puzzle or a piece of knowledge. I think life is like that, when you're ready for the lesson, the lesson is provided, and if you're paying attention and I think that's the key, sometimes people don't pay attention. If you're paying attention you're saving those lessons to put those pieces together because every lesson is a part of the puzzle. I often think I don't know the big picture. God has this big picture and everything

happens for a reason and if I'm paying attention all the pieces are given to me and when I need that, that lesson comes and that's what happens and you move to the next level and the next level and it's when you start to not pay attention or rebel against a lesson that you get into trouble. You just have to pay attention.

Alex had several areas that she was paying attention to that may change her future professional path. Her special education student population with autism had substantially increased. She was very aware that newly diagnosed personal family health concerns were uncannily merging with her professional work with autism. Alex's personal journey and her professional journey were merging at this time in her life and becoming more intertwined.

Professional Leadership Journey

When Alex moved back to the Midwest, she returned to school for teaching certification. As a single parent, she was concerned with providing for her family.

I wasn't a special ed teacher before so when I thought about what I wanted to do to be marketable I went back to school here and did special ed, reading endorsement, all of those things that you could pick up so that it could be massively marketable. Ended up in working at a school in a low income area with special needs, which was pretty challenging. It was baptism by fire. I had twenty-two special needs student in the course of my day. None of them were self-contained but I had all of them at least three hours throughout the day. Eleven kids, three hours day in special needs with no associate. It was really challenging to be able to teach in that environment. I'm surprised I was still in teaching after the first year.

New teacher leadership experiences. During her seven years in the school district, Alex taught special education in three schools. Surprisingly as a first year teacher she had:

Lots and lots of opportunities to do leadership things because I was on the problem solving team and I was on team leader because we had grade team leaders and we did vertical and horizontal teaming at that point in that school and it was site based. All of this stuff. The administrator at the time made all site

based decisions. None of them were administrative trickle down kind of things. So it gave me lots of opportunities to jump in with leadership at the same time that I was starting off teaching special ed so it was kind of two fold. So it was interesting.

Alex took the leadership needs in stride as a new teacher. She explained:

It was kind of a sink or swim situation so you either got in and did it, or it didn't get done. I think sometimes that's how leadership comes about because there's the need and someone has to step up and it's the people that are willing to step up that become the leaders and that's just about what that was about. At that time too they [district administrators] were designing a new school and they needed people to be on the board to try and combine the two schools so they looked for teachers. I was the special needs teacher who was there full time because the more senior teacher only worked part time because her kids were small. She wasn't interested in putting in the extra hours or extra time and it fell to if they wanted input from special needs then it became...I was the person to step up and do it. It wasn't really my job but somebody had to say, "This is what we need for the special needs department." So I just kind of figured OK this is the time to say what you think.

Alex solidified her leadership commitment those first years as she described her other involvements at her first school. Many of her leadership commitments were things she chose.

Mostly it was just team leader because we needed somebody to do the weekly meetings of the teams and get the information and get back to the other people on your horizontal team and vertical team; to share that information to see how we could bring about the best outcomes for students. So I started off. That was just as I came and nobody else wanted the job and they said, "Do you want to do it?" And I said, "Yeah, well I guess!" That's how that one happened. Then the problem solving; I did volunteer for the problem solving part of it simply because I think as a special needs teacher you need to be very strong in advocacy for the needs of those kids because everyone comes to the table with a different set of criteria and without that understanding or background sometimes they get lost in the shuffle. So that was a very strong belief that I just felt that was where I was supposed to be. Then the site council for the development the school just fell too – we really need this input can you give it to us? Once we got involved in it, it was a very interesting process so you were happy to do it. But it was just at the time they were asking and you were new and you said, "Um, yeah!"

Change in teaching assignment. After three years as a special needs teacher in a low income school, Alex transferred to a school in an affluent area. She did not get involved with leadership at first because “the first year I was simply suffering from culture shock so intensely. It was all I could do to figure out how to teach in that environment and be effective because it was so different from everything I had done before. It was my first introduction to working with students with autism.” A new principal, with a special needs background, had also moved to the school. The identified special needs population tripled in one year as the principal and consultants identified students with special needs.

Alex’s “closet-sized room with a window” was no longer adequate as her student numbers grew from 6 to 18 during this first year. The principal stepped in to solve this problem in an unconventional manner that ultimately played a strong role in Alex’s leadership activity. The principal also encouraged Alex to join the MAE program:

The principal said this isn’t working, so I’ll move out of my office and you can move into my office, and I’ll move into the secretary’s office and we’ll share space and that way we’ll have room for kids. In moving I then became right next to the office, my classroom was right next to the office. There would be days when things would be going on with kids and the principal might be involved with a child in the office and somebody else came in and there wasn’t anybody else to deal with it. So I would just go in and start a conversation with the child and we’d end up resolving issues. And through the year it got to the point where there would be days when the principal was leaving for a meeting and she’d say, “Can you help in the office if there’s a discipline problem? Can you step over and do that?” So it was kind of an unofficial leadership position as being the protem principal when she was out of the building. Because that had developed over that first year, the second year when the leadership program (MAE) came around and she said, “You need to go and enroll in this program.” So that was how I got into it. Through the course of the first year, because I was doing so many things when she was there, with her, through her, she started saying, “Well you need to come to the team leader meeting.” Well we didn’t have a special ed team because I was it. But you need to come to the team leader meetings so you know how it’s going

on with the other teachers because you're having to work with everybody. So it just kind of built from the simple things. I guess stepping in as protem principal isn't the simple thing but was the normal thing with me because I had worked in a battered women's shelter. So I had worked with women who had been in crisis, and I had worked with children who had been in crisis, and I had answered the crisis line for several years, and done suicide assessments. So I had a background in relating to people and dealing with problems and crises. So it was an easy move from stepping out of that room as a special needs teacher into this room and dealing with the crisis that was going on.

Master's Program. Alex did sign up for the MAE program at the urging of her principal. This was a serendipitous event in her professional leadership journey:

I don't know if I'd have ever gone into educational leadership if it hadn't just kind of fallen into my lap. I think if I had said, "Oh, I'm going to go back and get my masters. What will I get it in?" I probably wouldn't have chosen leadership as the place that I would have gone. But having gotten into it changed the entire picture of education for me. It went from a being a very small picture of what happens in my classroom to being a very big picture for what happens for all students all the time.

The MAE program expanded Alex's view of the school picture. She looked beyond her classroom walls to expand her focus and vision to include the building situation.

The administrative educational leadership master opened it [mind set] to a really, really big picture thing and it made it easy to make the decisions. When I did the leadership stuff, everything I did then became a thought in the big picture rather than the personal or my class. It just opened the horizon so much.

The formal MAE program had supported Alex's personal and professional journey as a leader. As Alex reflected:

There's stuff happening that you've got to be paying attention to because it might be something you're supposed to do with that over here some other time. You can't always be planning your direction unless you're listening to the guidance that supposed to be there daily.

Purposes of Teacher Leadership

Personal Purposes

Desire to make a difference. Alex's teacher leadership began as a means to conduct her program and respect for students. She continued her reflection:

As a special needs teacher you need to be very strong in advocacy for the needs of those kids because everyone comes to the table with a different set of criteria and without that understanding or background sometimes they get lost in the shuffle. So that was a very strong belief that I just felt that was where I was supposed to be.

She was also able to create understanding between the special needs population and the regular education population at school. And she shared her teaching techniques with other teachers to help them in their classrooms with special needs and regular students.

Self-actualization. Alex took a number of classes to help her teach her students:

I've just finishing up my certification on control applied theory. I did that for purely a personal, selfish reason and I thought, you know if I can have something in my classroom, because when we teach special needs student behavior is always an issue so I took the class initially so that classroom management would take up less of my day. That was my selfish...and if I could have better relationship with people at home, when you have teenagers and I could say to my teenager, "What is it that you are wanting right now?" and get an answer. So it started out as being totally selfish but it ended up being a fabulous answer and it has paid off 100 fold when I'm having to step in the principal's shoes when somebody has been gone. This has made it wonderful. The conversations become shorter, the kids take responsibility, they make their forward moving plan, and you're out of there and done.

Accomplishment. The teacher leadership was a match for Alex's personal purpose and philosophy:

Sometimes I think the words I think of that people on the outside might use to describe me would be pushy and nosy. But I think those are also the things that make you get in and get involved with the kids and find out what's going on and what the issues are. Just being innately inquisitive and advocating for children, I think it was just a natural step for me to take. If I saw a child standing in crisis

and nobody was there, it wasn't just a thought, "I better go take care of this." Or, "is this my job or is this not my job?" And a lot of people say "This isn't my job." And they stop. But I don't see it as a matter of what is my job, what's in my job description, I just see it as a matter of need and if I see a child in crisis the need is to do whatever you can to rectify that crisis at that moment. I think maybe that's the mind set that leads you into leadership without it even being a conscious thought. Your goal is to just help make things better and you do it without thinking. It's not something you think, "Oh, this is a leadership role. This is a teaching role." You just think "This is my job." Or sometimes I don't even think of it as my job. This is just something I can do. So I do it.

Personal teacher leadership uses interpersonal strengths and has an awareness of weaknesses. Alex shared her view that leadership came from personality:

I think its personality and feeling secure enough in yourself. I think leaders have doubts but they don't let their self-doubt become the focus. Those are always...we stuff them in our back pocket and go about our day. You're often confronted with things that you think, "Wow! What should I do?" You have to stop and you weigh it, but you always try to keep the doubts at a minimum and not have it reflect on self. It's always got to be out there as objectives and how it's reflecting in the big picture. I think if you have a personality for being more of a global thinker than a micro management thinker, you tend to move into leadership positions or you tend to take on...even if its not leadership you're the person who takes on responsibilities within whatever you are doing that others tend to not want to accept because they're always thinking in the small. "How is it going to affect me? What is this going to do for me? How is it going to make my job harder?" I hear that a lot from other teachers and I think people who tend to take on those leadership kinds of responsibilities don't have that kind of thinking, because they think more globally. What's the big picture?

Alex's desire to help make a difference in the lives of her students expanded naturally to the leadership role of helping make a difference in the lives of all students in her school building. She drew on personal resources and strengths to help her in her leadership acts.

School Purposes

Student achievement. Alex's teacher leadership began as a means to help her students and expanded to school commitments and activities:

It just seemed like a normal move/step. It was like a hierarchy. I was just walking up the steps. Each one gave a little more responsibility but for me it was always also the learning of yet another layer of what we're doing for these kids and how we're getting that gap closed and how we're maximizing our student achievement and always protecting the rights and the needs of these special needs students.

Alex's classroom population of special needs had changed in recent years. The number of students with autism had increased. Her classroom focus with this student population had expanded to the school and district population. With these changes, Alex questioned where her leadership was headed. These excerpts express her concerns for her classroom population, the school population, and the district community in general:

Autism is starting to take over as my focus and where I am going to go with that I'm really not sure. But when we did rosters for next year they put all the kids with autism over here [at her school] and said, "These are yours." I think it's so wide and so varied and you have to be willing to try different things constantly to find out what works for just that one child. I'm really concerned at this point...

We've got big problems on our horizon, and we either have to totally change how we deliver curriculum or totally change the curriculum to include...

I see a need for something outside school for kids with autism to learn social skills and communication skills to understand what's being said and what's expected of them and how to use language in ways that they don't know how to use right now.

I'm more thinking in terms of the big picture of schools and classrooms and we're looking at this as what we're going to be faced with. How are we going to be able to accommodate these kids who don't understand language as we say it? So that's a biggie for me right now and getting people to realize that just because kids look normal doesn't mean they respond in normal ways. It's my new soap box.

Work of the organization. Alex had a strong desire to contribute positively and proactively to the work of the organization. She wanted to make the learning environment the best it could be for students to achieve success. She had developed a global view that includes the school, the district, and the community. Alex's experiences

with a special group of students have increased her awareness of an area of need. Her purpose of teacher leadership was to use her talents and knowledge to address needs and thus affect the goals and work of the school organization. She reflected about responsibility at the school:

A lot of people say, "This isn't my job." And they stop. I just see it as a matter of need and if I see a child in crisis the need is to do whatever you can to rectify that crisis at that moment. I think maybe that's the mind set that leads you into leadership without it even being a conscious thought. It's not something you think, "Oh this is a leadership role. This is a teaching role." You just think, "This is my job." Or sometimes I don't even think of it as my job. This is just something I can do. So I do it.

Acts of Teacher Leadership

Practices of Teacher Leadership

Shared knowledge. Alex's personal and professional purposes of teacher leadership were reflected in her acts of teacher leadership. As a new teacher to the district she became involved at the school and district level with activities and committees. As she grew in experience and knowledge she began to focus on areas of personal interest with impact in the all-school population. Alex shared how it was easy to move between her special education room and the principal's office because:

I had the background information. I knew the agencies. I knew where to direct people. I think it was just the idea that on a daily basis she [principal] saw the crisis interventions stuff coming through and the proximity made it easy. So that was just kind of a very simple shift and then, as I started into the leadership program, the team leadership was already being done. I was working with the team leaders. Then they started the special ed advisory committee from downtown. So they called and said we're doing a special ed advisory committee. We have somebody from the university. We want parents of students with special needs. We want elementary teachers, middle school teachers, high school teachers. Would you be interested? And I said, "Yes." Because I thought that was a very nice way to get information out and see if everybody was on the same page so I became involved in that.

Build professional learning community. Alex was engaged in building professional learning communities, sharing knowledge, and collaborating with school and district personnel through a variety of committees and channels. For Alex it was “a way to keep and gather more understanding” of facets in the special education program that included new compliance rules and regulations. She started meeting monthly with all special education teachers in the district. This led to weekly meetings. Alex also became a mentor for a new teacher in the building.

Seek a common good. The teacher leadership practices of shared knowledge and collaboration were reflected as Alex related the story of opening a new school at the same time the principal went on maternity leave:

The principal had her baby the Sunday before school started and we were to open the new school. I don't know how actually it came about, but it just worked itself out that if the principal was out of the building, it falls to the counselor and me to take on whatever responsibility happens to pop up during the day. And quite frankly we make a good team so it works out quite well. Anyway, it was the opening of the building and now we were a boat without a rudder. And it was that same thing, we (counselor and Alex) didn't either one stop and say, “This is our job or we need to do it.” There were just things that needed to be done and decisions that needed to be made and nobody was there to make them. So we were just saying do this, do this, this is how we're going to do this. And we didn't really think about it as a leadership position or taking on different responsibility. We just saw it as these are things that need to be done and somebody's got to do that. You look around and everyone else is saying, “Not me! Not me!” So you just say, “Okay.” I think part of it was just being secure enough to say we can make this decision. We know what we're doing is the right thing for the students and we're not afraid to say, “Okay, let's do this.”

This story reflected the practice of teacher leadership that seeks a common good. Alex continued to reflect on this facet of teacher leadership:

I think the guiding force for all of us who were making decisions was, “What's best for students?” I mean, you really only had to put it in that criteria each time something came up. “Okay, what's the best thing for the students? How do we

make a decision here that's going to be as equitable as possible yet be the best for everybody involved?" Where I think sometimes other people look at it as how they see it in terms of for my classroom. Or if I make a decision it's for this group, or it's for me. How is the decision I make going to affect me personally? We just never did that. We just always said what works best for the big picture? I think we went back to that thought always. That was my thinking all the time. What's best for everybody? What's best for the students?

These decisions were made during a time when the principal was on leave from school.

An interim principal had not yet been assigned to the building.

Collaboration. It was a close working team relationship that was so conducive to teacher leadership continuing the educational work of the school when the principal was gone. The beginning of the school year is always an important time and this was very true when the new school was opened that involved a redistricted school boundary. Alex knew the principal was receptive to teacher leadership and practiced a personal philosophy of always considering what is best for students. Alex, her principal, and the school counselor had a collaborative relationship.

Relationship with Principal

The relationship with the principal is an important element in reframed teacher leadership. It is recognized as either promoting teacher leadership or stifling it. In Alex's experience, principal leadership and teacher leadership were closely tied. They were mutually dependent. The relationship was collegial, flexible, collaborative, and respectful. Alex believed it was impossible for a principal to build community and keep it going without teacher leaders. Supporting a principal is an important part of teacher leadership. Alex knew that for the upcoming school year a new principal would be

assigned to her school. When asked if this would affect teacher leadership, Alex responded:

I think it will depend a lot on who the principal is as to how much it changes. But I think it will also fall to those of us that do leadership position now to make the transition as smooth as possible. There are always those negative pockets of influence, the negative mushrooms that you have to stomp on to make change happen. We need to, as the people that have been in leadership already and have that global thinking, mindset, personality, whatever it is. It's going to be our responsibility to keep the negatives to a minimum, to make the transitions as smooth as possible. To do as many community-building things as we can to keep that core together and get everybody on the same page. Hopefully whoever they put in there will have had enough experience that they won't come in the first year and try to make massive changes that will be too hard for people to accept. They'll come in and make a smoother transition. One of the nice things about our administration right now is everybody is treated very professionally. We're not micro-managed. We're allowed to make choices. We're trusted in what we do. There are a lot of people out there that want to micro-manage and do those things and I think it could be very detrimental. My hope is that it doesn't happen that way.

As a teacher leader, Alex was accepting a responsibility for helping to make the transition with a new principal as smooth and as successful as possible. She understood how critical the relationship is between a principal and teacher leaders.

Passion

Another critical element in the act of teacher leadership was passion. In Alex's opinion, this is the component that makes a teacher a leader. "This makes the difference between teachers and teacher leaders." Teacher leadership was:

Not something you quit doing when you walk out the door. Because you wake up at 3:00 AM and write things down or you think about things. It's there all the time. You don't walk away from it. Those who are in it [teaching] because the schedule worked with my kids or it was a great second income and it worked with raising my children or I like the idea of having summers off. They pull out their book, they look at their lesson plan and they teach what's in the book. They don't give anything extra; they don't add or subtract anything.

I think every teacher should have those leadership qualities. I mean if we were going to have ideal schools. Schools that really did close the gap, that make the difference. They would be staffed by those people having those desires all the time. I think that's a big thing in leadership: Are you self motivated? You did summer classes. You loaded up heavy in summer. That was self-motivating. If you went into teaching to make a difference then that's what you have to do and it's not something you think about. It was just part of what you bought. If you go buy a suit and it has three pieces, you wear all three pieces. If you take the job, you do the job.

In Alex's view, leadership and passion and job are all important, natural, intertwined elements. When asked the question, "Of all your different leadership things that you have done, what brings you the most joy or satisfaction?" Alex replied:

It's funny because I really don't think about it as leadership I guess that's one of the things that makes it hard...It's just part of the job. The job is so big that there really isn't a job description. At some times you're being the mom to these kids. At some times you're being the psychologist to these kids. At some time you're being the disciplinarian to these kids. It's just a big, big picture that doesn't really have a definition to it. It's like you have to be living in that moment and reacting to that moment, to that child. My group of kids is 12, but I see my job as relating to every child, all 500 students in that school are my job. Not just the 12 that come to my classroom.

I guess I just think that the reward is in when you get through each day and you know that in some way, even if it's just talking to one child in the morning that isn't in your room, that you don't really have a real connection to but you said their name and you talked to them, and you started their day off the way it needed to be started out. It can be as small as zipping up their coat or as big as when a child brought a pretend gun to school and I was the only staff person in the office.

Alex was passionate about her students and all students. "Teacher leader" was not an important title for Alex. She acknowledged the title and readily discussed it but was uncomfortable in applying it to herself. She was focused on the acts and the results of her actions, and the actions and results of the actions of the teachers in her school and in her district. Teacher leadership was a process to facilitate change and improve the school learning community.

Constraints to Teacher Leadership

Teacher effort and commitment. Alex did not think that all teachers could be leaders. In fact she expressed harsh criticism for teachers who did not give the effort to their teaching that she did.

I've been told by several teachers, "I'm not taking that [a course]. It's off contract. I'm not giving up my summer." And they're the people that don't care about the big picture. They don't care about every child and how we're going to make it work for every child. They have few leadership qualities because their focus is very internalized. "What's in it for me?" And if they're really truly thinking, "What's in it for me?" they'd go and take that class. Because their life would get way easier. But they see it as "I'm not giving up my free time. I don't want school to interfere with my summer time." And they'll never be leaders because they don't have the mindset, they don't have the personality. I think people with leadership qualities have strong personalities. I think sometimes we'd like to deny that but I think you do. I think you're either born with a strong personality or you're not. When you look at children you can pick out the ones in the classroom, even when they are real little, the ones who have strong personalities or are self-motivated. They have commitment.

You have to keep in mind always, why we are here. We're here for the kids. If you wanted to make money, don't be a teacher. I mean to me that was a simple one right off the bat. If you're here for money, you're in the wrong profession. There are a very small amount of people who are on the side of money, but they are always there. They are your negative mushrooms that you have to watch out for.

When asked how the teachers not involved in teacher leadership perceived the teachers that are involved in leadership, Alex answered

It depends on whether they are having a problem or not. If it's a problematic day, if they have a problem student, or a problem with the curriculum, or a problem in planning, or whatever, I think they see those of us in teacher leader positions as the life jacket that is going to keep them afloat. They are more than willing to come and ask for assistance or do whatever. I need you to help me with this or can you do this for me or whatever. But if everything is going okay then I think they see us as nosy, bossy, interfering.

I think they're glad that we're there and we do the thing we do. I think sometimes the negative response comes from a little bit of guilt because they know that they're not doing as much as they should be or could be. If you used us as a yardstick, they're definitely not measuring up and I think they feel that

sometimes and that's when we get the negative feedback. We get the positive feedback when are rescuing somebody.

But if what we're asking them or wanting them to do seems like something more on their plate, which in my eyes isn't anything more on your plate, taking the class is going to help you teach that class is just what you need to do. But if you're asking them to do what they feel is more on their plate, we're a very negative flow.

Teacher attitude and outlook. Teachers and principals can be a constraint to reframed teacher leadership. Teacher efficacy and collaboration are critical to leadership acts. When asked how she was able to keep in perspective the highs and lows of a leadership journey, Alex responded:

I guess part of the problem is that I don't think of things as lows. It's another learning opportunity. Lord, this isn't the lesson I was looking for today but...I think maybe the hardest thing for me is not holding other people, being able to deal with people and not hold other people to the same expectations that I have for myself. It's not really a low point, but I've had several instances when we've had to meet about a child and I said to a teacher can we meet at noon? And they'll say things like, "That's my lunch time. I hold that sacred and I'm not giving that up." For me that's really hard not to have a comeback to that teacher and to be able to see that what I'm hearing is not what they are saying. They're not saying that the child is not important to me, because that's what I'm hearing when they say that. So I have to figure out how to show that person the importance of what we need to do and get them to see that this 30 minutes, this one time, is probably not going to be dearth of their existence and that they can survive that 30 minute meeting. But I tend to have that same expectations of other people that I hold for myself and sometimes that's a lot higher than people are willing to go, so I have to take a step back and think, "Okay, who are you dealing with? What's the highest expectation you can expect and how do we bump it up just a little more because it might not be high enough."

My saying is "not enough information. I don't have enough information." When I'm expecting something of that person, and I'm not getting the results that I want, it's because I don't have enough information. So it's my job to find out more about that person's position. What they're thinking. What they're feeling. What is their expectation? I need all that information in order to be able to find out where they are. I see it as the next step. I need to bump them to another level because if we stay where we are we're all done. People who are willing to accept mediocrity drive me crazy. My solution is you don't have desire, there's the door. Go do something mediocre somewhere else.

The students and staff at Alex's elementary school were fortunate to work with her. As her narrative illustrated, Alex practiced third wave, reframed teacher leadership in all facets of her school life. Her diverse personal experiences helped inform her professional work. She was willing to share her expertise and talents for the collective good of the school community. She was passionate about her students, her teaching, and her leadership.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

Students and teachers are the first thoughts that come to mind when we think of education in general. They are inexorably connected. The purpose of schools is to educate students and this is accomplished primarily by teachers. Throughout educational history, the system has been very clear: teachers taught and principals administered. Teaching was leading within classrooms. Gradually teachers assumed more responsibilities in schools in various organizational areas. They have served as committee members, department chairs, and curriculum writers; however, time to accomplish these leadership roles was mainly after regular classroom hours. The school structure that supported this framework was formal, managerial, and hierarchical (Rogus, 1988).

A new wave of teacher leadership grew out of calls for change in order to meet educational needs and mandates. It was clear that leadership mattered and the form and function of leadership were integral to how it was enacted. A third wave practice of teacher leadership developed which was anti-hierarchical. It was reframed so that leadership became a natural part of the teachers' day; it was collegial, collaborative, and inclusive with administration. It included dispersed leadership, was founded on relationships, and was designed to serve the professional community (O'Hair & Reitzug, 1997; Pounder, Ogawa, & Adams, 1995; Wasley, 1991).

All types of teacher leadership practice are found in schools today (Du, 2007). This study focused on the third wave, reframed style of teacher leadership. The purpose of the study was to examine the past and present personal and professional experiences of practicing teacher leaders in order to understand how they acquired their competence and dispositions as teacher leaders. A narrative of lives format was used to explore these themes. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 11 recognized teacher leaders to reveal their leadership journeys including unique and common paths, experiences, influences, and characteristics of teacher leadership. A journey map time line activity was used to highlight personal and professional experiences.

Research Questions

Third wave practice of teacher leadership is based on leadership acts rather than leadership roles or titles. The issue of how teachers construct their knowledge for these acts of leadership is crucial to understanding this practice. Questions for this study were:

1. What professional experiences did teachers perceive as influencing their development of leadership skills?
2. What personal experiences did teachers perceive as influencing their development of leadership skills?
3. Had serendipity and happenstance influenced leadership development and opportunity?
4. How did the stories of teacher leaders influence their model of teacher leadership?
5. Why did teachers become involved with school leadership?
6. What role did the principal play in teacher leadership?

These questions guided the semi-structured interviews with 11 teacher leaders. The three pilot study teachers interviewed were active teacher leaders who taught reading, science, and talented and gifted students in all levels from kindergarten to ninth grades. They taught in two school districts not associated with the research study participants. One school district was a large urban district; the other was a small rural district. The teachers had taught a total of 69 years.

The eight research study teachers were purposely selected for the study because they were from one school district and had graduated from a university-school district partnership master's program entitled Educational Psychology: Professional Development for Teachers (MAE). This program was developed by the university at the request of the school district to focus on professional development in teacher leader concepts. The teachers taught in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade schools.

Conclusions: Research Questions

What Professional Experiences Influence Development of Leadership Skills?

For all teachers in the pilot study and research study, professional development experiences and opportunities were crucial in their development of leadership skills. These experiences can be divided into formal and informal categories. Both formal and informal professional development helped teachers to step outside their classroom doors and work with other teachers with the primary focus to improve student achievement.

Formal professional development. The teachers wanted their formal educational experiences to be valuable and directed toward improving their teaching and working with students, which they saw as their main purpose for leadership activities. Frost and

Durrant (2003) reported on a professional development framework that supports leadership in teachers. This framework included situations that allow for (a) reflection, planning, and strategic action, (b) support for discourse through groups and critical friendships, and (c) development of a collegial network. Teachers in my study found constructs in relationships and learning communities were specific areas of value. Terms used to describe this type of professional development were “in-depth” and “research-based” rather than “sit and go” meetings. Teachers wanted formal opportunities to be consistent and continual. One pilot study teacher reflected, “It is the immersion in professional development that makes the difference.” The importance of formal professional development was to expand teachers’ views and horizons in order to see the big picture.

Formal training in leadership concepts from other occupations readily transferred to school leadership as long as the training was “powerful,” “meaningful,” and “first class.” Religious leadership training also provided valuable leadership experiences and development.

Educational Psychology: Professional Development for Teachers (MAE). The research study teachers were accepted into the school-university MAE program based on criteria that identified them as teacher leaders including three letters of recommendation (from principals and two other sources), transcripts, and personal statements. The MAE program included three strands: leadership, assessment, and curriculum. During the interviews, five of the eight participants stated their teacher leadership began with the MAE program. Regardless of the fact that acceptance into the MAE program required

teachers to be recognized as teacher leaders, five of the teacher leaders perceived their leadership as beginning with this formal professional development program. The most important strand to all eight participants was the leadership strand specifically including: (a) analysis of personal leadership traits, (b) information on relationships, (c) collaboration with other teachers, and (d) readings on professional learning communities.

Informal professional development. Miller and O'Shea (1992) found that teachers had four different paths to leadership. These paths included experience, knowledge, vision, and respect for children. The unique trajectory of participants in my study was expressed through their voluntary choices of informal professional development experiences. They chose activities at school that related to their educational area: "I am the reading teacher so I take on those responsibilities." They chose activities that helped them teach: "I still use the HOTS training from 20 years ago to write curriculum. It was so valuable and good." They chose activities that benefited the school: "I volunteered to do that [Cabaret Show] so that the students would still have the opportunity to participate." They chose activities that were interesting: "Once we got involved in it, it was a very interesting process so you were happy to do it."

Teachers recognized that informal professional development opportunities, such as those found on school committees and groups, were important to their leadership development. Spillane, Hallett, and Diamond (2003) found teachers' recognize colleagues as leaders based on their interests and activities as leaders. Statements by teacher leaders in my study serve to illustrate. One research study participant shared, "Leadership is earned not granted." Teachers expended time and effort to impact their

teaching and learning. They wanted “more” because even if one has taught for 32 years, “stagnant isn’t good enough.” A pilot study teacher reflected on her involvement in leadership areas: “It is in the process of leadership you have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge of it.” A research study teacher stated, “Roles and abilities developed over time as I gained more skills.” Leadership “emerged...helped by mentors, skills, coursework, and actions.” As one teacher leader reflected, “I saw a need and I educated myself to meet it.” Lieberman and Miller (2004) found job experience and practice, trial and error, and job performance shaped leadership.

Teaching assignments facilitated leadership development and practice as well. Common knowledge among teachers was “you finally learn something when you teach it.” The two teachers who taught TAG classes [one pilot study and one research study participant] taught leadership to their students. These two teachers plus the research study special needs resource teacher also taught differentiation strategies to their respective staffs in three different schools.

What Personal Experiences Influence Development of Leadership Skills?

Personal experiences influenced the development of leadership skills. Teachers constructed leadership from personal experiences that influenced their professional leadership (Lambert, 1995; LeBlanc & Shelton, 1997). In my study these experiences began as early as age three and continued into adult lives. In fact, experiences in youth had a definite impact on leadership development as seven of the participants began their personal experiences journey map section in childhood. The three important youth experiences in my study were 4-H, church activities, and dancing lessons.

Organized club and church activities. The national 4-H youth organization and various church groups and activities involved youth in opportunities to learn leadership skills, work in teams, set and attain goals, and interact with many people. Four of the teacher leaders were active in 4-H; four of the teacher leaders were active in church groups, and one teacher leader had daily dance lessons starting at age three.

One of the most valuable learning insights gained was the experience of being in front of large numbers or groups of people. The teacher leaders learned in their youth to “be comfortable in front of” audiences as they made 4H presentations, led meetings, sang at church, and danced in recitals. They learned that hard work, especially with colleagues, was fun and worthwhile. These experiences in youth organizations paralleled formal professional adult learning experiences as they offered consistent and continual opportunities to lead that were meaningful, in-depth, and first-class.

Volunteer experiences. As adults, volunteer commitments to service organizations and churches were highlighted on six journey maps. During the interviews, the teachers were given the opportunity to choose either the personal or professional section of their journey maps to begin discussions. Two pilot study teacher leaders preferred to begin with their personal volunteer experiences which were extensive. The commitments paralleled significant professional development and youth experiences and reflected the theme: they offered consistent and continual opportunities to lead that were meaningful, in-depth, and first-class. The experiences were chosen by the participants because of these qualities. They included adult service organizations, churches, and a city council. The third pilot study teacher, who did not begin discussions with her

volunteer section, had volunteer experiences that were equally extensive but she chose to begin with professional development experiences that involved work with the internationally recognized educational leaders, William Glasser and Robert Marzano. However, her extensive adult volunteer experiences include service organizations (member for 35 years), church (Adult Sunday School teacher for 19 years), and civic and educational boards (total of 24 years).

Three research study teachers had volunteer experiences that were also extensive. Two leaders focused on church-related activities and one leader focused on helping at-risk populations. Commitment was a theme prevalent in all volunteer experiences. After making a commitment, the participants engaged fully in the work of the organization. They dedicated time, talent, and expertise to the success of the group. They functioned in many capacities: worker, leader, or promoter. They educated themselves to understand and meet a need, and then performed to the best of their ability. The qualities that made a good volunteer also made a good teacher and a good teacher leader.

Family experiences. Families influenced the teacher leaders from childhood through their present situations. As children, the teacher leaders witnessed parent leadership models, experienced parent encouragement in activities, and “went outside their comfort zone” in their efforts to please their parents.

As adults, all of the teacher leaders were wives and mothers. Six shared that organizing and managing their families were important leadership activities. In fact, one teacher said that raising her family was “what she was most proud of in her life.” Family activities were also a priority with all the teacher leaders. The teacher leaders chose their

teaching assignments, leadership activities, and arranged their schedules around the ages and needs of their children; commitments “ebbed” with their families. Generally, when children were small, leadership commitment was correspondingly narrow. One research teacher stated, “Then I had children and I really didn’t volunteer for anything. I remained strong in what I believed but it was unspoken.” As children grew older and more independent, leadership commitment expanded. One pilot study teacher began accepting more leadership responsibilities “at a time when my kids were at the age where it was possible to do it.”

The teacher leaders recognized the need for family support: “I could not do what I do without the support of my husband.” For the two teacher leaders with young children, they put “school obligations on hold” until the children were in bed. One teacher got up at 4:30 every morning to read and organize her day. She said, “This is not for everyone, but it works for me.” Krisko (2001) stated the most important attribute of potential teacher leadership is intrapersonal sense. This includes awareness of personal strengths, weaknesses, and goals. Personal and professional experiences provide this awareness that is critical to leadership potentials and acts.

Did Serendipity and Happenstance Influence Leadership Development and Opportunity?

Krumboltz (1998) wrote to career counseling psychologists that unplanned events affect everyone’s career. For all pilot and research teachers in my study, serendipity and happenstance experiences influenced their leadership development. The teachers could promptly cite and elaborately discuss the events. Eight teacher leaders designated the serendipity experiences as professionally based and three teacher leaders designated the

experiences as personally based. In a qualitative study of 13 women in counseling, Williams et al. (1998) also found that the careers of all participants were affected by serendipitous events.

Professional serendipity experiences. Two of the research study participants viewed the MAE program as their serendipitous leadership event. The information on professional learning communities and the work in collaborative groups was “the beginning” of leadership for these teachers. This program occurred at years 12 and 25 in their teaching career. Three research study participants credited encouragement by their principals to enroll in the MAE program as their serendipitous event. When a principal urged a teacher to undertake graduate work in leadership, it was a momentous, happenstance event; “the turning point...like, oh you could do it...changed my thinking of who I was at school and what I could do.” Also, “It was the guidance from someone else who said you could do this. You could have impact.” These experiences occurred at years 6 and 10 in their teaching careers. The MAE program further met their expectations for high quality professional development so that the intersection of the school-university MAE program was the catalyst for leadership recognition that the five teachers built on and expanded.

Two teacher leaders credited high quality professional development from national leaders as their serendipitous event. Information gleaned through these avenues established a personal knowledge base of leadership concepts. Both individuals traveled to large cities to take part in these national opportunities. As one teacher said, “It was truly right place, right time.” The final professional serendipity event was an overheard

conversation. The research study participant happened to hear her principal's conversation regarding a grant opportunity. He was going to turn down the financing to create a new class because "it was too much work." She quickly volunteered to assume responsibility and "never looked back." These opportunities occurred early in their teaching careers.

Personal serendipity experiences. The serendipity experiences that affected the leadership development for two pilot study participants and one research study participant were more than fleeting moments or happenstance encounters. The experiences were positive and negative ones which created lasting impressions and changes. A research study participant began daily dance lessons when she was three years old and danced until her early 30s. During this time her teacher became her mentor. The teacher leader began teaching classes in junior high and toured nationally in the summers teaching dance seminars. The contact with her mentor was continual, constant, and meaningful.

Bandura (1982) stated that change events can occur at any time in our lives and can be negative or fortuitous. A negative event was the impetus for changing careers for one pilot study teacher. When her husband and four children forgot her birthday it "made me so upset...made me start thinking about what was important to me. And it was just like that [snapped fingers], like overnight, I went into teaching." What was an unfortunate oversight became a complete career change from physical therapy to education.

A combination of negative and positive events, occurring within days of each other, convinced one pilot study teacher “that I must be doing something right and should probably continue...it was quite the weather dale I will have in my career.” Within a three day span, a student threatened suicide in her class, and two prestigious awards (one county and one national) were presented to her. She experienced a nadir situation followed closely by two peak experiences that remain fresh in her mind 18 years later.

The personal serendipitous events, occurring in childhood and early adulthood, were complex, meaningful, and in-depth experiences that profoundly affected the journeys of the individuals. In all situations, the serendipitous event was a jump-start to intrapersonal recognition of leadership capacity.

Did The Stories of Teacher Leaders Influence Their Model of Teacher Leadership?

As the teacher leaders shared their stories and journeys during the interviews, it became clear they were performing acts of reframed third wave teacher leadership. As Du (2007) found, teacher leaders bring different sets of skills, characteristics, qualities, and expectations to groups. Using Tables 1 and 2 as references, the words of the teachers illustrate the reframed model of teacher leadership.

Focus. The focus of reframed teacher leadership is based on relationships that build commitment in participants and shape the organization’s work. It is identified by the quality of the interactions and seeks a common good. The participants offered their purposes of teacher leadership:

1. To find and share knowledge that allows other teachers to grow. It enables teachers to feel comfortable stepping off the beaten path.

2. Giving a support system and continual improvement.
3. To help students achieve at their highest level, this may mean doing research or whatever it takes to help your students.
4. A new paradigm shift in education.

Domain. The domain of reframed teacher leadership includes effectiveness of the organization, commitment to the organization, shared values and beliefs, and group solidarity. People are interdependent. All are active in the process of leadership. The main goal of teacher leadership was student achievement. To this end, teachers studied and worked together to create professional learning communities to enhance student learning. Two teachers used the word stagnant as unacceptable for them. The teachers wanted to be the best and do the best for personal and school purposes. They preferred collaboration: “I couldn’t let her do that by herself.” They strove to create a community, “have visions”, and see “the big picture.” As one research study participant explained, “I don’t want to know it all and I don’t want to act like I know it all, but I want to be in the know. I want to be prepared. That’s the difference between a good quality teacher and one that doesn’t desire to be a leader.” The lessons were hard: “Lord, this isn’t the lesson I was looking for today but...what’s the highest expectation you can expect and how do we up it up just a little more because it just might not be high enough.” The biggest constraint to teacher leadership was time: “Quite frankly, teacher leadership takes time away from the very students I am trying to help.”

Eight teacher leaders voluntarily brought up passion in the course of the interviews. This was the crux of teacher leadership: “Passion makes the difference

between teachers and teacher leaders.” Shared commitment, passion and “truly a love for my students” united to make a difference in schools. Teacher leadership was “not just about teaching, it’s being involved...it’s a whole.”

Dispersed leadership. Shared leadership allowed teachers to move in and out of leadership activities according to time, interest, desire, and ability. Teachers had family obligations to consider, usually before taking on leadership commitments. In one pilot study teacher’s small district teachers “knew they had to take their turn and volunteer.” Teachers appreciated “new blood” and “new ideas” on committees and did not want committee membership “to be until death do you part.” Sixty-three percent of the participants responded that all teachers could be leaders, if they had the desire and the passion. “But being a teacher leader comes in very different forms. So how I have created teacher leadership matches my personality.” People are interdependent and all active in the professional learning community. Teachers got their highest satisfaction “seeing others grow.”

Constructivist and democratic. Teacher leadership is reflective leadership. Communication is crucial and conversational. One leadership team “collectively arrives at answers by providing the forum” for discourse. The teachers gained enough experience and confidence to “take on anything else” through the MAE program and collaboration. Teacher leadership values the democratic process and shared ethics. Although teacher leadership was constructed and emerged at different times and through different models, powerful professional development was a very important factor in encouraging teacher leadership (Smylie & Denny, 1990). As Miller and O’Shea (1992)

found, teacher leadership emerged through experience, knowledge, vision, or respect for children.

Why Did Teachers Become Involved with School Leadership?

Teachers became involved in leadership because they saw a need and stepped up to help. They had a desire to make a difference, accomplish something, and improve student achievement. Teacher leaders wanted control, not power. They wanted to understand the larger picture and create positive change. They believed in the re-professionalism as defined by Frost and Durrant (2003) which includes the collegial dimensions of responsibility, mutual accountability, and collaboration.

For teachers, leadership was a natural extension of the classroom: “It was really important to me that if I was going to be teaching in a classroom...then I needed to start teaching in a way that...addressed their needs. That was where my role started. It was a voluntary group.” One research study participant summarized: “That’s how leadership comes about because there’s the need and someone has to step up and it’s the people that are willing to step up that become the leaders.” Leadership was a match for interest combined with an appeal for help. They thought, “Well, I could do this.” Once teachers got involved in leadership, they were committed, “When I did the leadership stuff, everything I did then became a thought in the big picture rather than the personal or my class. It just opened the horizon so much.” They became more confident as leaders. Teachers also appreciated stepping out of the classroom to work with adults. They had “the most fun sharing ideas about anything and everything.” The teachers practiced third wave teacher leadership.

What Role Did the Principal Play in Teacher Leadership?

Teacher leadership functioned under the auspices of the school principal. As Anderson (2004) concluded, the type of teacher leadership and the extent of teacher leadership were determined by the principal. The teacher leaders in my study understood these concepts. They had experienced a broad range of principal support from “there is no teacher leadership now because the principal doesn’t want it” to “we could try anything we wanted.” The teachers knew that to lead outside their classrooms on a consistent basis, their principals had to support and encourage this climate.

The principals were important mentors for teacher leadership. The pilot study teachers shared examples of mentorship such as “he recruited me” and “I want you on this committee so figure out how to get the position.” Five of the eight research study teachers learned about the MAE program from their principals when they were encouraged to apply: “You could have impact” and “She opened the door to leadership.” One teacher shared, “If my principal believes in me, then I’m going to give her my best.”

The teacher leaders sincerely believed in shared, collaborative leadership to enhance the school learning community. “No one person can or should be expected to do it all.” Printy and Marks (2006) found the principal was the school leader in the practice of teacher leadership. The teacher leaders in my study readily acknowledged the principal was the leader of the building with specific administrative responsibilities:

If you don’t have an administrator that is the leader then you have a lot of people who want to be leaders and no one really is a teacher leader. They are just a lot of people doing whatever they want to do and there is a difference. I think the structure you set up in your building as far as relations...have a common mission...common values...very clear to all of us. In that setting...understand

roles better and feel good about their roles...then you have the opportunity for people to be teacher leaders.

Teacher leadership “is always a part of the teaching staff, not administration” and “it makes the administrator’s job easier. The flow of the building just goes better.” This leadership was reciprocal and authentic. In fact the teachers knew that they held a key in school transitions with new principals. The teachers stated they needed to be supportive and help new building principals.

The teacher leaders were cognizant of the characteristics of principals that were detrimental to teacher leadership:

- Ego;
- Do-it-all;
- Delegate too much;
- Dictatorship;
- Arrogant and narcissistic;
- Not a community member;
- Excluding some from leadership;
- Using only certain teachers or groups.

Principals are the recognized leaders of the school. Principal acts necessary for recognizing and promoting leadership are establishment of appropriate school culture, recognition of teacher leaders, and inspiring teachers’ confidence (Bishop, Tinley, & Berman, 1997). Information from my interviews supported this research finding. The teacher leaders were clear on the characteristics of principal leadership that encouraged teacher leadership:

- Be involved without taking control;
- Working together to mutually solve problems;
- Guide realistically;
- Understand what needs to be accomplished and what can be accomplished;
- Community viewpoint;
- Knowledgeable;
- Know personal strengths and surround yourself with people who have the strengths you don't have;
- Know the strengths and weaknesses of staff;
- Be first change facilitator;
- Validate and encourage staff.

Principals who inspired, motivated, and mentored teachers were more likely to share leadership. Collaboration enhanced the school climate and the teachers' satisfaction with their work.

Implications

Implications for Teachers

The overarching purpose of teacher leadership is instructional expertise to facilitate student achievement. Just as teachers are diverse, teacher leadership is diverse. The acts of teacher leadership reflect professional interests and abilities, personal goals and skills, and family situations and obligations. As one teacher leader said,

I looked at people who were really sharing something from their heart, and I thought, "Yeah, I don't agree with what they do here and I would never in a million years do that, but look at what they bring to the table in this area." And that makes them a leader at that point.

Teacher leadership is distinctive and can be nurtured. It is a natural extension of the teaching arena from working with students in the classroom to working with teachers outside the classroom. Teaching can be challenging as it is based on relationships in schools with students and staff. Teacher leadership intensifies this atmosphere. Teacher leaders can be perceived as either interfering in a situation or preventing a problem; a bane or a blessing to principals and teachers. Teachers need to be open to change as they move away from the norms of autonomy and deference to seniority. The acts of teacher leadership require flexibility because they may not be well-defined and mean different things to different people. As one teacher explained about teacher leadership, “It comes in very different forms...I can be their cheerleader in a sense and praising and recognizing teachers that way.” This view is definitely third wave teacher leadership and anti-hierarchical.

Teachers who are involved in school leadership prefer this work to be at the school level rather than the district level because at the school level they see the direct influence on students, staff, and school climate. It is in the process of nurturing relationships, encouraging change, building a professional learning community, and challenging the status quo that a dynamic school culture is created. And the return on leadership investment is multiplied for those involved who are invigorated, stimulated, educated, and recommitted to their teaching careers. As one teacher leader said, if teachers would expend the effort and commitment for a few minutes of leadership collaboration, “their life would get way better.”

Can all teachers lead? Sixty-three per cent of the teachers believed that all teachers could be leaders. These teachers added that passion, mentoring, and commitment were important mind sets for leading. Three teachers said no and one teacher was undecided about all teachers leading.

In analyzing the negative and uncertain responses, two teachers who did not think all teachers could be leaders were young in both chronological age and teaching experience [second stage]. The third negative response was by a teacher young in teaching experience but older chronologically. The undecided teacher was an experienced, veteran teacher. The two latter teachers were deeply committed and active teacher leaders with extensive personal volunteer experiences. Perhaps they interpreted the question as could all teachers be leaders in a similar manner to how they presently enacted their leadership. They had expansive personal and professional experiences which influenced their leadership development, and evolved over many years to influence their leadership philosophy. However, this veteran teacher also stated during the interviews that it is through the practice of leadership that it is acquired; immersion into leadership supports acts of leadership; and leaders have to be willing to admit mistakes. Continued opportunities for leadership in schools, supported and promoted by principals, creates teacher leaders. It is important to give teachers the opportunities to lead as it fits into their schedules and interests. Teachers can begin on a small scale as they wade into leadership, beginning in the shallow end and gradually immersing deeper and deeper.

Passion. The teachers in this study were passionate about teacher leadership. Eight teacher leaders brought up passion before being asked a question about it. The

three teacher leaders, who did not bring it up voluntarily, discussed passion vigorously when questioned. It is passion that propels teachers in their acts of leadership. The enthusiasm is contagious and becomes part of the school culture. For example one leadership cohort had 90% staff come help at an after school hours volunteer event. As one teacher stated, “The difference between being a teacher and being a teacher leader is passion.”

Implications for Principals

Principals have the ability and the authority to either promote or deny teacher leadership. Traditional, hierarchical principal leadership does not support third wave reframed teacher leadership. Schools are transformed when principals step out of the office to meet teachers who have stepped outside the classroom to tackle tough educational issues and mandates together. This is third wave teacher leadership.

Nurture teacher leadership. Principals can empower teachers and help them grow by recognizing and nurturing the potential in teachers. They can provide professional development, mentoring, and an atmosphere that supports the endeavors and risks teachers take on behalf of students. Principals can involve teachers in collaboration, decision-making, and curriculum issues. The attitude of the principal is critical for teacher leadership to flourish. Principals can show they value teachers through building shared practice into the structure of the school. They can set up a physical structure and schedule that allows time for teachers to work together, facilitates teachers moving in and out of leadership as interests and time dictate, and promotes teacher involvement in critical school issues.

Teacher leadership helps principals. The teachers in my study viewed teacher leadership as an opportunity to help principals to meet the educational demands on them. Both parties flourish through their collaborative efforts. It is within the scope of the principal to create a great school, where teachers are pleased with their work and stimulated to improve their practice, and principals shape and share in the professional learning community.

Implications for Professional Development

Professional development is important to teacher leaders as a means to improve their personal leadership skills and their work with students. It serves a dual role of recognizing and affirming good practice, and improving present and future practice. Teachers have firm requirements for effective professional development: it must be research based, in-depth, meaningful, consistent, continual, and applicable to their work.

An opportunity exists for professional development to help younger and less experienced teachers and those in second stage teaching (4-10 years) understand and develop their leadership potential. While experience is important, professional development can offer guidance and help in improving knowledge and interpersonal skills to promote teacher leadership concepts earlier in careers. Leadership legitimacy is earned by teacher leaders. Professional development can facilitate this process and development and encourage leadership practice in less experienced teachers as they learn throughout their professional lives.

Undergraduate teacher leader concepts. Preservice teacher education programs have rigorous and demanding requirements that keep students busy. However

introduction of third wave, reframed teacher leadership concepts would be very relevant for future teachers. As student teachers and new teachers, they would understand the complex nature of the seasoned, veteran teacher leaders in their buildings. Since principals are teachers before becoming administrators, future principals would also be introduced to teacher leadership concepts. Odell (1997) made a call for more preservice teacher education:

Teacher leadership needs to apply to all teachers in all schools so as to accomplish a change in the teaching profession as a whole. This is, perhaps, best accomplished by changing our teacher preparation curriculum to provide explicit education in teacher leadership. (p. 122)

Teacher leadership endorsement. Interview data collected from this study point to the idea that teachers were empowered by some type of recognition of their leadership abilities. It came in different forms and at different times in teaching careers and it looked different for each teacher. It was more than a “pat on the back.” It was a principal or coworker sincerely acknowledging efforts to make a difference; it was a cohort group having 90% of the staff show up for an after school volunteer event; it was teachers, who were accepted into the MAE program because they were leaders, stating that the program was the beginning of their teacher leadership. A formal type of teacher leader endorsement, with consistent standards and requirements, has implications for state departments of education in terms of recognition and promotion of teacher leadership. It may encourage younger teachers and rejuvenate veteran teachers.

Lessons from Serendipity and Happenstance

Bandura (1982) stated that chance encounters and experiences can be some of the most important determinants of life paths. Krisko (2001) reported that all aspects of life

experiences provide opportunities to leadership skills and demeanors. All the teacher leaders in my study had serendipity experiences that strongly influenced their leadership development and careers. Teachers in the study needed a trigger or catalyst to help them recognize their leadership skills and practices. The serendipity experiences of the MAE program and the mentors urging teachers to sign up for this program provided the catalyst for five of the eight research study participants. One research study participant also had intense professional development and one had a happenstance conversation as triggers for leadership and career opportunities. The final research study participant had a 30-year personal mentor relationship that profoundly influenced her leadership ability. The pilot study teachers had personal and professional serendipity experiences that were the catalyst for leadership development, recognition, and career direction.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study examined teacher leadership from the perspective of teachers who were actively engaged in leadership in their respective schools. An interesting, coordinating perspective would be to continue to examine teacher leadership through the eyes of the principals who work with these teachers.

The main purpose of teacher leadership is student achievement. How strong is the tie between teacher leadership and student achievement? Does teacher leadership improve student achievement? How does teacher leadership affect instructional development and the climate and culture of schools? A follow up on Jenny's statement: "if teachers are happy, then students work better" is another area of interest and focus.

A further investigation of teacher leadership and student achievement could explore the relationship between high performing and low performing schools and teacher leadership. How active is teacher leadership in these schools? What are the real world issues in these situations?

The population for this study lacked diversity in terms of gender and ethnicity. Both factors need to be explored in a narrative of lives inquiry to compare and contrast with this study. Teacher leadership could also be examined through the lens of feminist pedagogy.

This study explored elementary and middle levels of education but not upper secondary levels. Teacher leaders from this educational level should be interviewed to compare and contrast with elementary teacher leadership. What are the similarities and differences in these buildings? Other variables for consideration could be the ages of teachers and years of teaching experience. How do these areas affect teacher leadership?

Formal professional development was very important to teacher leaders. A further exploration of the types of professional development and professional development partnerships that promote teacher leadership is critical in understanding the needs in this area. What should the content include? Who should present the professional development? What location is best? What professional development model that facilitates teacher leadership is best?

Other concerns to explore are the change process, feelings of empowerment, and influences on teacher productivity. A further exploration of influences on leadership

development could include how teachers navigate the structures of schools and ways in which mentoring affects and nurtures teacher leadership?

Exploring teacher leadership will continue to sharpen the image, improve the delivery system, and enrich the lives of teachers, students, principals, and school communities.

EPILOGUE

The Journey Continues

As I stated in the preface, teacher leadership means “something different to me.” It is more than my work as a department chair who communicates administrative information to teachers in my department, orders textbooks, and calls substitute teachers. I learned through research and interviews the teacher leadership that is “something different” is reframed, third wave teacher leadership. It is dynamic collaboration with others to solve problems and meet students’ needs. My teacher leadership journey on the school leadership team continues to be the most powerful activity in which I am involved. Our group now looks different as it has evolved by design and by circumstance over four years. After two years, we reluctantly began to think about membership commitment and change. One member had grown tired of the time obligation. One member had to retire due to serious health problems. So we established a rotation plan. Certain members of the group became permanent: the principal, vice principal (who had been added after the first year), counselor, media teacher, and TAG teacher. The remaining six classroom teachers went on two year rotation terms. Our group changed four members in two years. Then the counselor left the school and a new counselor was hired. Since this was the same year as a member was going on maternity leave, we let these naturally occurring changes take over the rotation schedule for that year. While the change has been fine, we missed the input from the teacher who had retired due to illness. With her health now recovered, the school district found some money to hire her as a research specialist and she rejoined the team. She is a special teacher who acquired her

leadership stature through knowledge of students and curriculum, and we are delighted she is back on the team. She adds to our mix of thinkers, doers, planners, and researchers on the team.

Leadership meeting. It is a monthly leadership meeting day. Usually I have an idea of what I need to take to the meeting but today I am puzzled. I ask one of the other members and she does not know either. So I pull out a couple of notebooks, the treats I baked, and head to the meeting. We have always sat in a circle so that we are facing one another and the desks have already been arranged when I arrive. Our principal has some notes on the board and some handouts. Our vice principal usually has other obligations and comes late to the meetings. The member just back from maternity leave will stay in the classroom this morning and join us in the afternoon. So we begin our day.

The principal starts the meeting with two articles from one of his administrative publications. The articles are passed around with half going to one side of the room and the other half going to the other side. We are to read and share our article. Our principal has embraced the concept of third wave, reframed teacher leadership very well. This was a new concept to him, as it was to all of us, and he has worked hard at team membership. We recognize that he is still our administrator but his efforts to embrace third wave teacher leadership concepts have been sincere. He has worked to establish a school culture that supports and nurtures teacher leadership and he inspires our confidence.

The mood begins to change as we start discussing the articles. One article is on professional learning communities and the other is on excellence in teaching. We talk and reflect about the ideas in the articles that are important to each of us. The question is

asked, “What are we planning for our next professional development day?” Our retired teacher lists the unfinished work from the last professional development day. Her constant reminder is that we do not give our teachers enough time to work on what we present. Our biggest problem in planning is we tend to crowd too much into one staff professional development day. Our principal points out his list of possibilities on the board. And then the question is asked that begins to excite us. There is always something that focuses us and guides us. This time it is a question by the new counselor: “I know I am new here and don’t know all you have done. But in all these ideas from these articles what could we use that would create change? And how could we do it?”

The magic begins; our passion fuels us. The collective efficacy and the synergy of the group are in gear. People lean forward and sit on the edge of their chairs. Ideas are shared, dismissed, questioned, expanded, and cheered. At the end of four and a half hours, we have a new plan for the school. We will create our own mini professional learning communities that will work on the rigor and relevance framework we are presently using. We have created second order change for our building based on researched information.

It was an exciting meeting. I caught the eye of our principal as he was leaving for an afternoon meeting and we both shook our heads in amazement. When we walked in that morning, no one had any idea that our final product would be creating new groups of small professional learning communities to enhance student achievement.

After a late lunch, we organized the groups, developed the handouts, and finished the agenda. As a leadership team we frequently include other staff members in

presentation, using their areas of expertise and interest. We know we can not do it all by ourselves, nor do we want to do it all by ourselves. By involving staff in different ways, we disperse our leadership, communicate regarding issues and needs, and involve others in leadership experiences.

I casually asked one member how she would describe the meeting. She said, "I wish everyone could experience what goes on in our meetings. They can't understand it. You can barely describe it. And it wouldn't work in a large group. But it is amazing. It is synergy in action." We have developed a trusting relationship which encourages all viewpoints to be shared. In our leadership circle, all members are equally valued and important. We are prepared and looking forward to our next staff professional development day.

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APPENDIX A
EMAIL QUESTIONNAIRE

(Date)

Dear Colleague

You have been recommended by Dr. John Henning, UNI, as an outstanding teacher leader. I am a public school teacher and a student at UNI. Presently I am in the process of beginning my research in teacher leadership. So that I can prepare the best interviews possible, would you please take a minute to answer the following questions and return this email to me?

Place a check in front of any of the leadership activities that you do. There is no limit to how many checks you make. Generally, relate the question to activities you presently do or have done in the last 5 years. If you wish to make comments, please do so.

_____ serve on school committees

_____ serve on district committees

_____ serve on state committees

_____ serve on union committees

_____ serve in professional organizations

_____ mentor teachers

_____ collaborate with peers

_____ write grants

_____ facilitate staff development

_____ active with technology

_____ active with school improvement issues

_____ assist colleagues

_____ continued personal education

Would you be willing to be interviewed on your teacher leadership experiences? _____

Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Cynthia Kenyon

APPENDIX B
INFORMATIONAL LETTER

(Date)

Dear Colleague,

You are invited to participate in a research project conducted through the University of Northern Iowa. The purpose of this study is to add to the growing body of knowledge relating to teacher leadership. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project and the following information is provided to help you make an informed decision about participation.

This study is for a doctoral research dissertation: Teacher Leadership Development: A Narrative of Lives Study. You have been selected to participate in the study because you are a graduate of the Teacher Leader Program at UNI. The study will involve a semi-structured interview that will take about an hour and half of your time. Prior to the interview, you will be asked to complete a "Journey Map" which is a time line of professional and personal leadership experiences. With your permission, I would like to tape record the interview to assure accuracy of all information. The tapes will be destroyed once the research has been completed.

All information obtained during this study that could identify you will be kept strictly confidential through a coding process that will separate your name from the data. The findings will be used in my dissertation and could be published in an academic journal or presented at a scholarly conference. Your participation is strictly voluntary.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact me at 319 266-5730 or my advisors Linda Fitzgerald and Mary Herring, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Northern Iowa, at 319 273-2167. You can also contact the office of the IRB Administrator, University of Northern Iowa, at 319 273-6148.

Thank you for your time and attention to my research. I look forward to meeting you. Please email me at kenyonc@hotmail.com or call me at 319 266-5730 if you will participate in this study.

Thank you,
Cynthia Kenyon
Doctoral Student

Linda Fitzgerald/Mary Herring
Advisors

Agreement: I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project as stated above and the possible risks arising from it. I hereby agree to participate in this project. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the consent statement. I am 18 years of age or older.

(Signature of participant)

(Date)

(Signature of researcher)

(Date)

(Signatures of advisors)

(Date)

APPENDIX C
PHONE CALL SCRIPT

Phone call script to potential research participant:

Hello, this is Cynthia Kenyon.

Recently I sent you a letter about my doctoral research at UNI. I am following up the letter to see if you have any questions about the study or need any more information regarding the study.

Will you be able to participate in the study?

Thank you for participating. I would like to set up an interview date, time, and place right now. What date and time work for you?

Where would you like to meet? I suggest a meeting room at the Cedar Falls Public Library as it would be quiet and away from interruptions.

One thing I would like for you to do before our meeting is a time line of your personal and professional leadership experiences. I found this very helpful when I was thinking about my leadership experiences. I will send you one either by postal mail or email. Which do you prefer?

I will make a room reservation for us at the library and confirm the reservation with you. Shall I call or email you with this information?

Thank you so much for participating. I look forward to our meeting.

Good bye.

APPENDIX D
JOURNEY MAP

(Date)

Dear Colleague,

The attached journey map is a helpful tool to illuminate influences in our lives. It can highlight events, milestones, and situations that have positively and negatively impacted our leadership growth and development.

I actually had fun when I completed my journey map. Of course the setting was very unique and special – I took it with me to the Grand Hotel on Mackinaw Island and completed it during afternoon tea (I can still picture the setting and the food). I hope you too can find a quiet corner to sit and reflect on your leadership journey.

Some specific instructions for mapping:

1. The middle line divides the paper in half.
2. On the top half of the paper, write in professional experiences, training, situations, activities, and awards that have been a part of your teacher leadership development.
3. On the bottom half of the paper, write in personal experiences, training, situations, activities, and awards that have contributed to your leadership views and skills.
4. If you need more space, please add on another sheet of paper.
5. This can be in rough draft or final form. Please bring it to the interview.

Thank you for your time and effort. I look forward to our meeting.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Kenyon

JOURNEY MAP

Professional



Personal

APPENDIX E
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
WITH RESOURCE DOCUMENTATION

Interview Questions with Research Source

Biographical information:

1. What is your teaching assignment? (Smylie & Denny, 1990);
2. How long have you been teaching? At your present school? (Smylie & Denny);
3. What are your present leadership responsibilities? (Smylie & Denny);
4. When do you perform these responsibilities? (Smylie & Denny);
5. What have been past leadership responsibilities? (Smylie & Denny);

Thematic questions:

1. How do you define teacher leadership? (Smylie & Denny);
2. Regarding your journey map, what kinds of professional experiences influenced your leadership development? (Snell & Swanson, 2000);
3. Regarding your journey map, what kinds of personal experiences influenced your leadership development? (Snell & Swanson);
4. Have unplanned or happenstance events influenced your leadership career?
(Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999);
5. How did you enable each happenstance event to influence you? (Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999);
6. How do you feel about unplanned or happenstance events in your future?
(Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999);
7. What have been your most influential personal experiences? (Stone, Horejs, & Lomas, 1997);

8. What have been your most influential professional experiences? (Stone, Horejs, & Lomas, 1997);
9. At your school, how are leadership positions designated? (Stone, Horejs, & Lomas, 1997);
10. Who selects the leaders? (Stone, Horejs, & Lomas, 1997);
11. Why do teachers accept leadership positions or roles? (Stone, Horejs, & Lomas, 1997);
12. What factors promote teacher leadership? (Stone, Horejs, & Lomas, 1997);
13. What factors constrain teacher leadership? (Stone, Horejs, & Lomas, 1997);
14. In what ways does teacher leadership improve professional practice? (Stone, Horejs, & Lomas, 1997);
15. What skills are needed to be a teacher leader? (LeBlanc & Shelton, 1997);
16. What was a peak experience (high point) in your life? (Crossley, 2000);
17. What was nadir experience (low point) in your life? (Crossley, 2000);
18. What was a turning point in your personal life? (Crossley, 2000);
19. What was a turning point in your professional life? (Crossley, 2000);
20. What is an important adult memory, positive or negative, that stands out? (Crossley, 2000);
21. What is the adult learning environment in your school? (Lambert, 1995);
22. Can all teachers lead? (Lambert, 1995);
23. Are there leadership opportunities for all teachers in your school? (Lambert, 1995);

- 24. Is there an equitable environment in your school? (O'Hair & Reitzug, 1997);
- 25. What areas do you have the most influence? (O'Hair & Reitzug, 1997);
- 26. Do you plan on continuing your career as a teacher leader or going into another area? (Henning, 2004).

APPENDIX F**PERMISSION TO TAPE RECORD INTERVIEW**

Permission to Tape Record Interview

The purpose of tape recording our interviews is to assure accuracy. After the dissertation research is completed and accepted, the tape recordings will be destroyed.

I give my permission for the interviews relating to the dissertation project: *Reframed Teacher Leadership: A Narrative Inquiry* to be tape recorded.

(Signature of Participant)

(Date)

(Signature of Researcher)

(Date)

APPENDIX G
PILOT STUDY
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND PROTOCOL

Hi, it is so nice to meet you. Thank you for coming.

There is some business we need to take care of before we start the interview. I would like to audio ape record our interview for accuracy. I will not use your name in any publication and will destroy the tape once my dissertation has been accepted. Please sign this form that gives me permission to tape record our interview.

Thank you.

Let us begin by looking at your journey map.

1. Tell me when your professional leadership journey began.
2. What experiences have you noted in your professional journey?
3. What professional experiences have been most influential on your leadership development and skills?
4. What personal experiences have you noted in your leadership journey?
5. What personal experiences have been most influential on your leadership development and skills?
6. What has been a peak experience in your leadership journey?
7. What has been a nadir or low experience in your leadership journey?
8. Do you have a turning point in your experiences?
9. Who has influenced you in your leadership journey?
 1. Professional?
 2. Personal?

10. Overall, have professional experiences been more influential than personal, or vice versa?
11. What is your present teaching assignment?
12. How long have you been at your school?
13. What are your present leadership responsibilities?
14. How did you acquire these responsibilities?
15. What have been your past leadership responsibilities?
16. How did you acquire those responsibilities?
17. Which of your leadership responsibilities gives you the most satisfaction?
Least satisfaction?
18. At your school, how are leadership positions designated?
19. Are there teacher leadership opportunities at your school?
20. Is there an equitable environment in your school?
21. Does your principal support teacher leadership? How?
22. Are other teachers supportive of teacher leadership?
23. Do you think other teachers at your school want to be teacher leaders?
24. Who selects the teacher leaders at your school?
25. Why do teachers accept leadership positions or responsibilities?
26. What factors promote teacher leadership?
27. What factors constrain teacher leadership?
28. What skills are needed to be a teacher leader?
29. Can all teachers lead?

30. How do we nurture teacher leadership?
31. What is your definition of teacher leadership?
32. Does teacher leadership improve professional practice? How?
33. What areas do you have the most influence? Why?
34. Do you plan on continuing your career as a teacher leader or going into another area?
35. Have unplanned or happenstance events influenced your leadership career?
36. How did you enable each unplanned or happenstance event to influence you?
37. Were any of these events on your journey map?
38. How do you feel about unplanned or happenstance events in your future?

Thank you for your time. I really appreciate it. I will go over the interview and get back to you with any further questions.

Please call me or email me if you think of anything to add to our conversation.

APPENDIX H
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Reframed Teacher Leadership: A Narrative Inquiry

Research Study Interview Questions

1. What is your present teaching assignment?
2. How long have you been at your school?
3. What are your present leadership responsibilities?
4. How did you acquire these responsibilities?
5. What have been your past leadership responsibilities?
6. How did you acquire those responsibilities?
7. At your school, how are leadership positions designated?
8. Are there teacher leadership opportunities at your school?
9. Is there an equitable environment in your school?
10. Does your principal support teacher leadership? How?
11. Are other teachers supportive of teacher leadership?
12. Do you think other teachers at your school want to be teacher leaders?
13. Who selects the teacher leaders at your school?
14. Why do teachers accept leadership positions or responsibilities?
15. What factors promote teacher leadership?
16. What factors constrain teacher leadership?
17. What skills are needed to be a teacher leader?
18. Can all teachers lead?
19. How do we nurture teacher leadership?
20. What is your definition of teacher leadership?

21. Does teacher leadership improve professional practice? How?
22. What areas do you have the most influence? Why?
23. Which of your leadership responsibilities gives you the most satisfaction? Least satisfaction?
24. Let's talk about your journey map. Do you want to start with the personal or professional side of your map?
25. Tell me when your professional leadership journey began.
26. What experiences have you noted in your professional journey?
27. What professional experiences have been most influential on your leadership development and skills?
28. What personal experiences have you noted in your leadership journey?
29. What personal experiences have been most influential on your leadership development and skills?
30. What has been a peak experience in your leadership journey?
31. What has been a nadir or low experience in your leadership journey?
32. Do you have a turning point in your experiences?
33. Who has influenced you in your leadership journey?
 1. Professional?
 2. Personal?
34. Have unplanned or happenstance events influenced your leadership career?
35. How did you enable each unplanned or happenstance event to influence you?
36. Were any of these events on your journey map?

37. How do you feel about unplanned or happenstance events in your future?
38. Overall, have professional experiences been more influential than personal, or vice versa?
39. Do you plan on continuing your career as a teacher leader or going into another area?

APPENDIX I
PILOT STUDY LETTER

(Date)

Dear Colleague,

You are invited to participate in a pilot study research project conducted through the University of Northern Iowa. The purpose of this pilot study is to add to the growing body of knowledge relating to teacher leadership. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project and the following information is provided to help you make an informed decision about participation.

Thus study is for a doctoral research dissertation: Teacher Leadership Development: A Narrative of Lives Study. You have been selected to participate in the study because you are a recognized teacher leader in your school. The study will involve a semi-structured interview that will take about an hour and half of your time. Prior to the interview, you will be asked to complete a "Journey Map" which is a time line of professional and personal leadership experiences. With your permission, I would like to tape record the interview to assure accuracy of all information. The tapes will be destroyed once the research has been completed.

All information obtained during this study that could identify you will be kept strictly confidential through a coding process that will separate your name from the data. The findings will be used in my dissertation and could be published in an academic journal or presented at a scholarly conference. Your participation is strictly voluntary.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact me at 319 266-5730 or my advisors Linda Fitzgerald and Mary Herring, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Northern Iowa, at 319 273-2167. You can also contact the office of the IRB Administrator, University of Northern Iowa, at 319 273-6148.

Thank you for your time and attention to my research. I look forward to meeting you. Please email me at kenyonc@hotmail.com. or call me at 319 266-5730 if you will participate in this study.

Thank you,
Cynthia Kenyon
Doctoral Student

Linda Fitzgerald/Mary Herring
Advisors

Agreement: I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project as stated above and the possible risks arising from it. I hereby agree to participate in this project. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the consent statement. I am 18 years of age or older.

(Signature of participant)

(Date)

(Signature of researcher)

(Date)

(Signatures of advisors)

(Date)